


JANE AUSTEN





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Brigham Young University

JANE AUSTEN





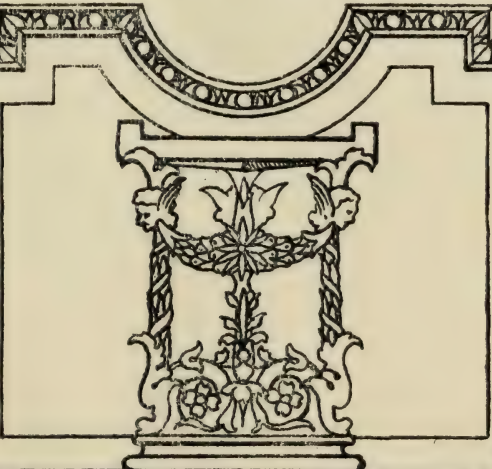
Jane Austen.

PR
4032
.S23

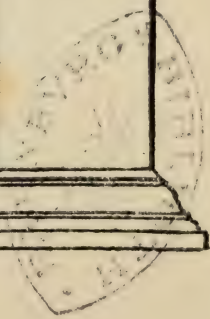
THE REGENT LIBRARY

JANE AUSTEN

By LADY
MARGARET SACKVILLE



LONDON :
HERBERT & DANIEL
95. New Bond Street
W.



Printed by
The Westminster Press, 411a, Harrow Road, London, W.

Contents

	PAGE
CALENDAR OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
MANSFIELD PARK	i
PERSUASION	89
EMMA	141
SENSE AND SENSIBILITY	264
NORTHANGER ABBEY	361
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	433
APPRECIATIONS	467

HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

Calendar of Principal Events in Jane Austen's Life.

- 1775. Born December 16, at Steventon Parsonage, Hampshire.
- 1801. At age of twenty-five went to reside at Bath.
- 1805. On her father's death removed to Castle Square, Southampton, with her mother and sister.
- 1809. Left Southampton for cottage in neighbourhood of Chawton, near Winchester.
- 1811. *Sense and Sensibility* published anonymously.
- 1813. *Pride and Prejudice* published.
- 1814. *Mansfield Park* published.
- 1816. *Emma* published.
- 1817. July 18, death at Winchester.

Introduction

JANE AUSTEN is a refuge for all those who have wandered too long in stormy ways of literature, or have grown footsore from following some austere guide upon a difficult road. She symbolises everything that is most delightful in the idea of home—the fire glimmering at night upon white panelled walls, rooms suggesting kindly memories—an atmosphere of warmth and cheerfulness—a garden full of sunlight and softly perfumed flowers. After being scolded and shaken soundly for one's good, as is so often the case in modern literature (since the present-day author's attitude towards his reader, like the painter's towards his sitter, is usually that of severe contempt), it is soothing to one's self-respect to be treated with the courtesy and breeding Miss Austen (how natural the Miss sounds !) invariably shows her guests. For a guest one feels oneself to be indeed—on a leisurely visit in some old red-brick mansion, surrounded by delightful people who rarely bore one, or cease to interest and amuse.

Yet Jane Austen can be tart enough—insipidity is the last accusation which can be raised against her—only her gift of kindly humour prevents her from ever becoming shrewish. She has that essential to

all true criticism, whether of life or literature—a fundamental sympathy which can recognise the virtues as well as the faults of whatever or whoever it approaches. In this respect she is a finer satirist than Fielding, her great predecessor. Fielding wished to castigate, not to understand. He did not advance beyond a simple system of rewards and punishments to be meted out to the hero and villain at the end of the story—a system which survives now solely in melodrama. But in this respect, Jane Austen showed greater subtlety: her characters are delicately shaded and their fates (if such a large word can be applied to anything so fragile!) are the consistent outcome of their dispositions—by no means dependent on the intervention of the author. The customary relation of an author of that period to his creations was a little like that of a minor Providence who majestically awarded or withheld praise and blame. But Jane's sense of psychology was far too acute, and she was far too human and unpedantic to make such an attitude possible to her.

It would be interesting to know how far she was influenced by Fielding—though there is little trace of any definite influence at all in work so wholly individual. But she must have deeply appreciated the former's magnificent irony—his brilliant character drawing—his unfailing vitality, and doubtless learnt a considerable amount from him. How difficult it is for the modern writer to realise the isolation of the writer of a century ago! Now there are influences and models without end—*then* only a few great masters stood out like lonely trees against the sky-line.

Take away Shelley, Browning, Tennyson, Meredith, Carlyle, Swinburne—to mention a few tremendous names at random—and leave the modern minor writer, whether of prose or verse, with say, only Shakespeare and Milton behind him and it is probable he would never speak at all. Then far greater self-reliance, and a stronger personality was needed to write anything of value than now—when writers can fall back on so many individualities to supplement defects in their own. *Then* there was little to be gained from outside assistance unless one happened perhaps to be a dramatist and chose to imitate Shakespeare !

Jane Austen was the first really modern novelist, and save in a few superficial passages and a few minor characters, does not carry date. She is more modern in a sense than Dickens or Thackeray, for these were the very embodiment of the early Victorian period. Emma, Elizabeth, Mary Crawford—to take the first characters that occur—are as vital as the people with whom one had tea yesterday. They have but to express themselves a little differently, and to change their dress, and one could talk with them as easily as with one's latest acquaintances. Whereas how remote the characters of Dickens and Thackeray appear by comparison !

Fielding had the modern touch, too ; but vivid, inimitable, entirely admirable as they are, his characters (the principal at all events) are rather drawn to represent types than individuals. He is too concerned with the victory of Virtue over Vice (both undiluted according to the literary conception of the age) to

allow his own keen intuition into the workings of human nature always to guide him. This was a probably unconscious concession to the tradition of the times since one feels a deeper sympathy on Fielding's side with the delinquencies of his heroes, Tom Jones, for instance, than he himself would have been likely to acknowledge. He is often the exact equivalent in words of Hogarth's pictures, and like Hogarth, appeals rather to the curiosity of those interested in bygone manners than to any immediate sympathy. Jane Austen (though working on a smaller scale) has all Fielding's vividness, but is a hundred miles away from the Hogarthian element in his nature. Fielding is a gentleman—but also a wanderer over sea and land—a frequenter of pot-houses—a brawler on occasion and with no squeamishness to trouble him. Jane Austen, seated at her elegant writing-table, with no desire to stray beyond the Park gates, produces work as vivid and even truer to life. Yet they are nearly related—with one great bond between them—that of humour. This is the element which keeps their work salt and crisp for all time. There is this difference between them: Jane's smile is always sweet, and Fielding's has sometimes a bitter twist which distorts the whole of his face—but it is in both cases that fundamental humour which preserves the world's sanity—and without which all work, however excellent in every other respect, must in the end fall to pieces.

Of course her world was very limited—yet no admirer of Jane's is likely to complain of that. Not for her were those wild tracts where none can wander

with unbruised feet. Hers was no country of high hills and plains with the cloud shadows sweeping across them—foaming rivers and unexplored woods—but a gentle Summer country grouped with old trees and with a sleepy river wandering amongst water-lilies. Not that the air is by any means relaxing—there is a sharp, glad quality contained in it which is delicious and reviving. Jane Austen never lulls to sleep—but she brings rest. She has the healing touch and if worries obsess one, smoothes them away. She has both heart and intellect and therefore never cloy with the one nor oppresses with the other. She possesses that sweet reasonableness which is one of the qualities most desirable in friendship, so that perhaps above all writers she is to be prized as a friend—and how few there are among the masters of literature one would dare to consider so intimately—Charles Lamb, certainly, and Jane Austen—they are ideal friends.

One has always the impression that Jane Austen wrote for the fun of it—as she might write an amusing letter, with no idea that she was doing anything remarkable—certainly not of producing a work of art! She told a story which was interesting to herself and which possibly might be interesting to other people—that was all. The characters developed as the story unfolded, and she amused herself by following their various lives. It is utterly impossible to imagine Jane complaining of unsympathetic surroundings—of being misunderstood—of not being taken seriously enough! Her surprise was probably all on the side of being taken seriously at all. She would certainly

have opened her eyes if she had known the vogue she was to enjoy. She possessed a finely tempered common-sense which worked with her imagination instead of being in opposition to it—as is so often the case. And her life is just a subdued background of no particular pattern against which her work stands out vividly. There is no special incident for the biographer to seize on—no passion, no tragedy, no bewildering joy or sorrow. She lived a fragrant, happy, good-humoured existence, infinitely interested in everyday details, losing no opportunity but gathering up a whole golden hoard of trivial experiences from a morning call—from little family concerns—from dances (which she probably enjoyed greatly)—from the personal peculiarities and differences of her friends. She was never a “literary woman.” The attitude of George Sand, for instance, towards art and life would have been utterly alien to her. She did not take her own or the opposite sex over seriously. She would certainly value character and moral integrity before brains, and the ordinary course of existence with its conventions and restrictions seemed good enough to her for all intelligent people. It is amusing to think what she would have said to Ibsen’s heroines ! Yet she is a triumph for Feminism. She has produced on a small scale almost completely perfect work, and whilst charm and breeding and humour and good-humour are appreciated in the world she is never likely to be forgotten.

To consider the novels separately is a delightful occupation and one over which, with a sympathetic listener, one might linger for ever—since it is always

a pleasure to discuss a charming mutual friend with one who understands. Appreciation of Jane Austen, however, is so intimate a thing—so largely a question of personality—that it is only possible to state one's individual preferences. To quarrel about her between genuine admirers would be a breach of good manners impossible in her presence. To me therefore, personally, *Emma* represents Jane Austen at her very best even more so than *Pride and Prejudice*—though *Emma* herself is less attractive than Elizabeth Bennet. But in *Emma* there are hardly any perceptible halts—no Darcy, who to me is tedious beyond endurance, especially in the chapters devoted to his correspondence—and there are Mr. and Mrs. Elton and the Knightleys and “poor Miss Taylor” and Miss Bates and *Emma* herself and Mr. Woodhouse and Harriet and others among the minor characters—all alive and vibrating to their finger-tips. I rank *Northanger Abbey* very high also—with its charming silly Catherine Morland and the immortal Mrs. Allen—but *Mansfield Park* is spoilt for me by the consummate priggishness of Edmund, whose influence has even succeeded in making Fanny tiresome—though Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram are of course incomparable. But one might linger for ever—Selections from Jane may possibly exasperate those who love her already, but they will certainly succeed in procuring for those others who are temperamentally her admirers, yet who by some strange chance have not discovered her already, a vivid and considerable enjoyment. The difficulty in choosing from Jane is that one would so often wish to quote

the whole book : that being impossible one has to be content with certain shining passages whose brilliance nothing can extinguish, though away from their context.

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

Manstield Park

Selfish Considerations

[The character of Mrs. Norris is clearly illustrated in the opening pages of the novel, where, as usual, she seeks to "do good" at the expense of other people.]

ABOUT thirty years ago, Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady, with all the comforts and consequences of a handsome house and large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match, and her uncle, the lawyer, himself, allowed her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim to it. She had two sisters to be benefited by her elevation ; and such of their acquaintance as thought Miss Ward and Miss Frances quite as handsome as Miss Maria, did not scruple to predict their marrying with almost equal advantage. But there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world as there are pretty women to deserve them. Miss Ward, at the end of half a dozen years, found herself obliged to be attached to the Rev. Mr. Norris, a friend of her brother-in-law, with scarcely any private fortune, and Miss Frances fared yet worse. Miss Ward's match, indeed, when it came to the point, was not contemptible ; Sir Thomas being happily able to give his friend an income in the

living of Mansfield, and Mr. and Mrs. Norris began their career of conjugal felicity with very little less than a thousand a year. But Miss Frances married, in the common phrase, to disoblige her family, and by fixing on a lieutenant of marines, without education, fortune, or connections, did it very thoroughly. She could hardly have made a more untoward choice. Sir Thomas Bertram had interest, which, from principle as well as pride—from a general wish of doing right, and a desire of seeing all that were connected with him in situations of respectability, he would have been glad to exert for the advantage of Lady Bertram's sister; but her husband's profession was such as no interest could reach; and before he had time to devise any other method of assisting them, an absolute breach between the sisters had taken place. It was the natural result of the conduct of each party, and such as a very imprudent marriage almost always produces. To save herself from useless remonstrance, Mrs. Price never wrote to her family on the subject till actually married. Lady Bertram, who was a woman of very tranquil feelings, and a temper remarkably easy and indolent, would have contented herself with merely giving up her sister, and thinking no more of the matter; but Mrs. Norris had a spirit of activity, which could not be satisfied till she had written a long and angry letter to Fanny, to point out the folly of her conduct, and threaten her with all its possible ill consequences. Mrs. Price, in her turn, was injured and angry; and an answer, which comprehended each sister in its bitterness, and bestowed such very disrespectful reflections on the pride of Sir Thomas, as Mrs. Norris could not possibly keep to herself, put an end to all intercourse between them for a considerable period.

Their homes were so distant, and the circles in which they moved so distinct, as almost to preclude the means of ever hearing of each other's existence during the eleven following years, or, at least, to make it very wonderful to Sir Thomas, that Mrs. Norris should ever have it in her power to tell them, as she now and then did, in an angry voice, that Fanny had got another child. By the end of eleven years, however, Mrs. Price could no longer afford to cherish pride or resentment, or to lose one connection that might possibly assist her. A large and still increasing family, a husband disabled for active service, but not the less equal to company and good liquor, and a very small income to supply their wants, made her eager to regain the friends she had so carelessly sacrificed ; and she addressed Lady Bertram in a letter which spoke so much contrition and despondence, such a superfluity of children, and such a want of almost everything else, as could not but dispose them all to a reconciliation. She was preparing for her ninth lying-in ; and after bewailing the circumstance, and imploring their countenance as sponsors to the expected child, she could not conceal how important she felt they might be to the future maintenance of the eight already in being. Her eldest was a boy of ten years old, a fine spirited fellow, who longed to be out in the world ; but what could she do ? Was there any chance of his being hereafter useful to Sir Thomas in the concerns of his West Indian property ? No situation would be beneath him ; or what did Sir Thomas think of Woolwich ? or how could a boy be sent out to the East ?

The letter was not unproductive. It re-established peace and kindness. Sir Thomas sent friendly advice and professions, Lady Bertram dispatched

money and baby-linen, and Mrs. Norris wrote the letters.

Such were its immediate effects, and within a twelve-month a more important advantage to Mrs. Price resulted from it. Mrs. Norris was often observing to the others that she could not get her poor sister and her family out of her head, and that, much as they had all done for her, she seemed to be wanting to do more ; and at length she could not but own it to be her wish, that poor Mrs. Price should be relieved from the charge and expense of one child entirely out of her great number.

“What if they were among them to undertake the care of her eldest daughter, a girl now nine years old, of an age to require more attention than her poor mother could possibly give? The trouble and expense of it to them would be nothing, compared with the benevolence of the action.” Lady Bertram agreed with her instantly. “I think we cannot do better,” she said ; “let us send for the child.”

Sir Thomas could not give so instantaneous and unqualified a consent. He debated and hesitated : it was a serious charge ; a girl so brought up must be adequately provided for, or there would be cruelty instead of kindness in taking her from her family. He thought of his own four children, of his two sons, of cousins in love, &c. ; but no sooner had he deliberately begun to state his objections, than Mrs. Norris interrupted him with a reply to them all, whether stated or not.

“My dear Sir Thomas, I perfectly comprehend you, and do justice to the generosity and delicacy of your notions, which, indeed, are quite of a piece with your general conduct ; and I entirely agree with you in the main as to the propriety of doing everything one

could by way of providing for a child one had in a manner taken into one's own hands ; and I am sure I should be the last person in the world to withhold my mite upon such an occasion. Having no children of my own, who should I look to in any little matter I may ever have to bestow, but the children of my sisters ? and I am sure Mr. Norris is too just—but you know I am a woman of few words and professions. Do not let us be frightened from a good deed by a trifle. Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one but she has the means of settling well, without farther expense to anybody. A niece of ours, Sir Thomas, I may say, or, at least, of *yours*, would not grow up in this neighbourhood without many advantages. I don't say she would be so handsome as her cousins. I dare say she would not ; but she would be introduced into the society of this country under such very favourable circumstances as, in all human probability, would get her a creditable establishment. You are thinking of your sons ; but do not you know that of all things upon earth that is the least likely to happen, brought up as they would be, always together like brothers and sisters ? It is morally impossible. I never knew an instance of it. It is, in fact, the only sure way of providing against the connection. Suppose her a pretty girl, and seen by Tom or Edmund for the first time seven years hence, and I dare say there would be mischief. The very idea of her having been suffered to grow up at a distance from us all in poverty and neglect, would be enough to make either of the dear sweet-tempered boys in love with her. But breed her up with them from this time, and suppose her even to have the beauty of an angel, and she will never be more to either than a sister."

“ There is a great deal of truth in what you say,” replied Sir Thomas, “ and far be it from me to throw any fanciful impediment in the way of a plan which would be so consistent with the relative situations of each. I only meant to observe, that it ought not to be lightly engaged in, and that to make it really serviceable to Mrs. Price, and creditable to ourselves, we must secure to the child, or consider ourselves engaged to secure to her hereafter, as circumstances may arise, the provision of a gentlewoman, if no such establishment should offer as you are so sanguine in expecting.”

“ I thoroughly understand you,” cried Mrs. Norris ; “ you are everything that is generous and considerate, and I am sure we shall never disagree on this point. Whatever I can do, as you well know, I am always ready enough to do for the good of those I love ; and though I could never feel for this little girl the hundredth part of the regard I bear for your own dear children, nor consider her, in any respect, so much my own, I should hate myself if I were capable of neglecting her. Is not she a sister’s child ? and could I bear to see her want, while I had a bit of bread to give her ? My dear Sir Thomas, with all my faults I have a warm heart ; and, poor as I am, would rather deny myself the necessities of life than do an ungenerous thing. So, if you are not against it, I will write to my poor sister to-morrow, and make the proposal ; and, as soon as matters are settled, I will engage to get the child to Mansfield ; you shall have no trouble about it. My own trouble, you know, I never regard. I will send Nanny to London on purpose, and she may have a bed at her cousin, the saddler’s, and the child be appointed to meet her there. They may easily get her from Portsmouth to town by the coach, under the care of any creditable person

that may chance to be going. I dare say there is always some reputable tradesman's wife or other going up."

Except to the attack on Nanny's cousin, Sir Thomas no longer made any objection, and a more respectable, though less economical rendezvous being accordingly substituted, everything was considered as settled, and the pleasures of so benevolent a scheme were already enjoyed. The division of gratifying sensations ought not, in strict justice, to have been equal; for Sir Thomas was fully resolved to be the real and consistent patron of the selected child, and Mrs. Norris had not the least intention of being at any expense whatever in her maintenance. As far as walking, talking, and contriving reached, she was thoroughly benevolent, and nobody knew better how to dictate liberality to others; but her love of money was equal to her love of directing, and she knew quite as well how to save her own as to spend that of her friends. Having married on a narrower income than she had been used to look forward to, she had, from the first, fancied a very strict line of economy necessary; and what was begun as a matter of prudence soon grew into a matter of choice, as an object of that needful solicitude which there were no children to supply. Had there been a family to provide for, Mrs. Norris might never have saved her money; but having no care of that kind, there was nothing to impede her frugality, or lessen the comfort of making a yearly addition to an income which they had never lived up to. Under this infatuating principle, counteracted by no real affection for her sister, it was impossible for her to aim at more than the credit of projecting and arranging so expensive a charity; though perhaps she might so little know herself, as to walk home to the Parson-

age, after this conversation, in the happy belief of being the most liberal-minded sister and aunt in the world.

When the subject was brought forward again, her views were more fully explained ; and, in reply to Lady Bertram's calm inquiry of " Where shall the child come to first, sister, to you or to us ? " Sir Thomas heard with some surprise, that it would be totally out of Mrs. Norris's power to take any share in the personal charge of her. He had been considering her as a particularly welcome addition at the Parsonage, as a desirable companion to an aunt who had no children of her own ; but he found himself wholly mistaken. Mrs. Norris was sorry to say, that the little girl's staying with them, at least as things then were, was quite out of the question. Poor Mr. Norris's indifferent state of health made it an impossibility : he could no more bear the noise of a child than he could fly ; if, indeed, he should ever get well of his gouty complaints, it would be a different matter ; she should then be glad to take her turn, and think nothing of the inconvenience ; but just now, poor Mr. Norris took up every moment of her time, and the very mention of such a thing she was sure would distract him.

" Then she had better come to us," said Lady Bertram, with the utmost composure. After a short pause Sir Thomas added with dignity, " Yes ; let her home be in this house. We will endeavour to do our duty by her, and she will, at least, have the advantage of companions of her own age, and of a regular instructress."

" Very true," cried Mrs. Norris, " which are both very important considerations ; and it will be just the same to Miss Lee, whether she has three girls to teach,

or only two—there can be no difference. I only wish I could be more useful ; but you see I do all in my power. I am not one of those that spare their own trouble ; and Nanny shall fetch her, however it may put me to inconvenience to have my chief counsellor away for three days. I suppose, sister, you will put the child in the little white attic, near the old nurseries. It will be much the best place for her, so near Miss Lee, and not far from the girls, and close by the housemaids, who could either of them help to dress her, you know, and take care of her clothes, for I suppose you would not think it fair to expect Ellis to wait on her as well as the others. Indeed, I do not see that you could possibly place her anywhere else.”

Lady Bertram made no opposition.

“I hope she will prove a well-disposed girl,” continued Mrs. Norris, “and be sensible of her uncommon good fortune in having such friends.”

“Should her disposition be really bad,” said Sir Thomas, “we must not, for our children’s sake, continue her in the family ; but there is no reason to expect so great an evil. We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinion, and very distressing vulgarity of manner ; but these are not incurable faults ; nor, I trust, can they be dangerous for her associates. Had my daughters been *younger* than herself, I should have considered the introduction of such a companion as a matter of very serious moment ; but, as it is, I hope there can be nothing to fear for *them*, and everything to hope for *her*, from the association.”

“That is exactly what I think,” cried Mrs. Norris, “and what I was saying to my husband this morning. It will be an education for the child, said I, only being

with her cousins ; if Miss Lee taught her nothing, she would learn to be good and clever from *them*."

" I hope she will not tease my poor pug," said Lady Bertram : " I have but just got Julia to leave it alone."

" There will be some difficulty in our way, Mrs. Norris," observed Sir Thomas, " as to the distinction proper to be made between the girls as they grow up ; how to preserve in the minds of my *daughters* the consciousness of what they are, without making them think too lowly of their cousin ; and how, without depressing her spirits too far, to make her remember that she is not a *Miss Bertram*. I should wish to see them very good friends, and would, on no account, authorise in my girls the smallest degree of arrogance towards their relation ; but still they cannot be equals. Their rank, fortune, rights, and expectations, will always be different. It is a point of great delicacy, and you must assist us in our endeavours to choose exactly the right line of conduct."

Mrs. Norris was quite at his service ; and though she perfectly agreed with him as to its being a most difficult thing, encouraged him to hope that between them it would be easily managed.

It will be readily believed that Mrs. Norris did not write to her sister in vain. Mrs. Price seemed rather surprised that a girl should be fixed on, when she had so many fine boys, but accepted the offer most thankfully, assuring them of her daughter's being a very well-disposed, good-humoured girl, and trusting they would never have cause to throw her off. She spoke of her farther as somewhat delicate and puny, but was sanguine in the hope of her being materially better for change of air. Poor woman ! she probably thought change of air might agree with many of her children.

Fanny Arrives

[The child, sent from her poor parents at Portsmouth to her rich relatives at Mansfield Park, is at first very miserable in her strange surroundings.]

The little girl performed her long journey in safety ; and at Northampton was met by Mrs. Norris, who thus regaled in the credit of being foremost to welcome her, and in the importance of leading her in to the others, and recommending her to their kindness.

Fanny Price was at this time just ten years old, and though there might not be much in her first appearance to captivate, there was, at least, nothing to disgust her relations. She was small of her age, with no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty ; exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice : but her air, though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke her countenance was pretty. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram received her very kindly ; and Sir Thomas, seeing how much she needed encouragement, tried to be all that was conciliating ; but he had to work against a most untoward gravity of deportment ; and Lady Bertram, without taking half so much trouble, or speaking one word where he spoke ten, by the mere aid of a good-humoured smile, became immediately the less awful character of the two.

The young people were all at home, and sustained their share in the introduction very well, with much good-humour and no embarrassment, at least on the part of the sons, who at seventeen and sixteen, and tall of their age, had all the grandeur of men in the eyes of their little cousin. The two girls were more at a loss from being younger and in greater awe of

their father, who addressed them on the occasion with rather an injudicious particularity. But they were too much used to company and praise to have anything like natural shyness ; and their confidence increasing from their cousin's total want of it, they were soon able to take a full survey of her face and her frock in easy indifference.

They were a remarkably fine family, the sons very well-looking, the daughters decidedly handsome, and all of them well-grown and forward of their age, which produced as striking a difference between the cousins in person, as education had given to their address ; and no one would have supposed the girls so nearly of age as they really were. There was in fact but two years between the youngest and Fanny. Julia Bertram was only twelve, and Maria but a year older. The little visitor meanwhile was as unhappy as possible. Afraid of everybody, ashamed of herself, and longing for the home she had left, she knew not how to look up, and could scarcely speak to be heard, or without crying. Mrs. Norris had been talking to her the whole way from Northampton of her wonderful good fortune, and the extraordinary degree of gratitude and good behaviour which it ought to produce, and her consciousness of misery was therefore increased by the idea of its being a wicked thing for her not to be happy. The fatigue, too, of so long a journey became soon no trifling evil. In vain were the well-meant condescensions of Sir Thomas, and all the officious prognostications of Mrs. Norris that she would be a good girl ; in vain did Lady Bertram smile and make her sit on the sofa with herself and pug, and vain was even the sight of a gooseberry tart towards giving her comfort ; she could scarcely swallow two mouthfuls before tears interrupted her, and sleep

seeming to be her likeliest friend, she was taken to finish her sorrows in bed.

“ This is not a very promising beginning,” said Mrs. Norris, when Fanny had left the room. “ After all that I said to her as we came along, I thought she would have behaved better ; I told her how much might depend upon her acquitting herself well at first. I wish there may not be a little sulkiness of temper—her poor mother had a good deal ; but we must make allowances for such a child ; and I do not know that her being sorry to leave her home is really against her, for, with all its faults, it *was* her home, and she cannot as yet understand how much she has changed for the better ; but then there is moderation in all things.”

It required a longer time, however, than Mrs. Norris was inclined to allow, to reconcile Fanny to the novelty of Mansfield Park, and the separation from everybody she had been used to. Her feelings were very acute, and too little understood to be properly attended to. Nobody meant to be unkind, but nobody put themselves out of their way to secure her comfort.

The holidays allowed to the Miss Bertrams the next day, on purpose to afford leisure for getting acquainted with, and entertaining their young cousin, produced little union. They could not but hold her cheap on finding that she had but two sashes, and had never learned French ; and when they perceived her to be little struck with the duet they were so good as to play, they could do no more than make her a generous present of some of their least valued toys, and leave her to herself, while they adjourned to whatever might be the favourite holiday sport of the moment, making artificial flowers or wasting gold paper.

Fanny, whether near or from her cousins, whether in the school-room, the drawing-room, or the shrub-

bery, was equally forlorn, finding something to fear in every person and place. She was disheartened by Lady Bertram's silence, awed by Sir Thomas's grave looks, and quite overcome by Mrs. Norris's admonitions. Her elder cousins mortified her by reflections on her size, and abashed her by noticing her shyness : Miss Lee wondered at her ignorance, and the maid-servants sneered at her clothes ; and when to these sorrows was added the idea of the brothers and sisters among whom she had always been important as play-fellow, instructress, and nurse, the despondence that sunk her little heart was severe.

The grandeur of the house astonished, but could not console her. The rooms were too large for her to move in with ease ; whatever she touched she expected to injure ; and she crept about in constant terror of something or other ; often retreating towards her own chamber to cry ; and the little girl who was spoken of in the drawing-room when she left it at night, as seeming so desirably sensible of her peculiar good fortune, ended every day's sorrows by sobbing herself to sleep. A week had passed in this way, and no suspicion of it conveyed by her quiet passive manner when she was found one morning by her cousin Edmund, the youngest of the sons, sitting crying on the attic stairs.

" My dear little cousin," said he, with all the gentleness of an excellent nature, " what can be the matter ?" And sitting down by her, was at great pains to overcome her shame in being so surprised, and persuade her to speak openly. " Was she ill ? or was anybody angry with her ? or had she quarrelled with Maria and Julia ? or was she puzzled about anything in her lesson he could explain ? Did she, in short, want anything he could possibly get her, or do for her ?

For a long while no answer could be obtained beyond a "No, no—not at all—no, thank you"; but still he persevered; and no sooner had he begun to revert to her own home, than her increased sobs explained to him where the grievance lay. He tried to console her.

"You are sorry to leave mamma, my dear little Fanny," said he, "which shows you to be a very good girl: but you must remember that you are with relations and friends, who all love you, and wish to make you happy. Let us walk out in the park, and you shall tell me all about your brothers and sisters."

On pursuing the subject, he found that, dear as all these brothers and sisters generally were, there was one among them who ran more in her thoughts than the rest. It was William whom she talked of most, and wanted most to see. William, the eldest, a year older than herself, her constant companion and friend: her advocate with her mother (of whom he was the darling) in every distress. "William did not like she should come away; he had told her he should miss her very much indeed."—"But William will write to you, I dare say."—"Yes, he had promised he would, but he had told *her* to write first."—"And when will you do it?" She hung her head and answered, hesitatingly, "She did not know; she had not any paper."

"If that be all your difficulty, I will furnish you with paper and every other material, and you may write your letter whenever you choose. Would it make you happy to write to William?"

"Yes, very."

"Then let it be done now. Come with me into the breakfast-room, we shall find everything there, and be sure of having the room to ourselves."

"But, cousin, will it go to the post?"

“ Yes, depend upon me it shall : it shall go with the other letters ; and as your uncle will frank it, it will cost William nothing.”

“ My uncle ! ” repeated Fanny, with a frightened look.

“ Yes, when you have written the letter, I will take it to my father to frank.”

Fanny thought it a bold measure, but offered no farther resistance ; and they went together into the breakfast-room, where Edmund prepared her paper, and ruled her lines with all the good-will that her brother could himself have felt, and probably with somewhat more exactness. He continued with her the whole time of her writing, to assist her with his penknife or his orthography, as either were wanted : and added to these attentions, which she felt very much, a kindness to her brother which delighted her beyond all the rest. He wrote with his own hand his love to his cousin William, and sent him half a guinea under the seal. Fanny’s feelings on the occasion were such as she believed herself incapable of expressing ; but her countenance and a few artless words fully conveyed all their gratitude and delight, and her cousin began to find her an interesting object. He talked to her more, and, from all that she said, was convinced of her having an affectionate heart, and a strong desire of doing right ; and he could perceive her to be farther entitled to attention, by great sensibility of her situation, and great timidity. He had never knowingly given her pain, but he now felt that she required more positive kindness, and with that view endeavoured, in the first place, to lessen her fears of them all, and gave her especially a great deal of good advice as to playing with Maria and Julia, and being as merry as possible.

From this day Fanny grew more comfortable. She felt that she had a friend, and the kindness of her cousin Edmund gave her better spirits with everybody else. The place became less strange, and the people less formidable; and if there were some amongst them whom she could not cease to fear, she began at least to know their ways, and to catch the best manner of conforming to them. The little rusticities and awkwardness which had at first made grievous inroads on the tranquillity of all, and not least of herself, necessarily wore away, and she was no longer materially afraid to appear before her uncle, nor did her Aunt Norris's voice make her start very much. To her cousins she became occasionally an acceptable companion. Though unworthy, from inferiority of age and strength, to be their constant associate, their pleasures and schemes were sometimes of a nature to make a third very useful, especially when that third was of an obliging, yielding temper; and they could not but own, when their aunt inquired into her faults, or their brother Edmund urged her claims to their kindness, that "Fanny was good-natured enough."

Edmund was uniformly kind himself; and she had nothing worse to endure on the part of Tom than that sort of merriment which a young man of seventeen will always think fair with a child of ten. He was just entering into life, full of spirits, and with all the liberal dispositions of an eldest son, who feels born only for expense and enjoyment. His kindness to his little cousin was consistent with his situation and rights: he made her some very pretty presents, and laughed at her.

As her appearance and spirits improved, Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris thought with greater satisfaction of

their benevolent plan ; and it was pretty soon decided between them, that though far from clever, she showed a tractable disposition, and seemed likely to give them little trouble. A mean opinion of her abilities was not confined to *them*. Fanny could read, work, and write, but she had been taught nothing more ; and as her cousins found her ignorant of many things with which they had been long familiar, they thought her prodigiously stupid, and for the first two or three weeks were continually bringing some fresh report of it into the drawing-room. "Dear mamma, only think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together—or my cousin cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia—or she never heard of Asia Minor—or she does not know the difference between water-colours and crayons ! How strange ! Did you ever hear anything so stupid ? "

"My dear," their aunt would reply, "it is very bad, but you must not expect everybody to be as quick at learning as yourself."

"But, aunt, she is really so very ignorant ! Do you know, we asked her last night, which way she would go to get to Ireland ; and she said, she should cross to the Isle of Wight, and she calls it *the Island*, as if there were no other island in the world. I am sure I should have been ashamed of myself, if I had not known better long before I was so old as she is. I cannot remember the time when I did not know a great deal that she has not the least notion of yet. How long ago it is, aunt, since we used to repeat the chronological order of the kings of England, with the dates of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns ! "

"Yes," added the other ; "and of the Roman emperors as low as Severus ; besides a great deal of

the heathen mythology, and all the metals, semi-metals, planets, and distinguished philosophers."

"Very true, indeed, my dears, but you are blessed with wonderful memories, and your poor cousin has probably none at all. There is a vast deal of difference in memories, as well as in everything else, and therefore you must make allowance for your cousin, and pity her deficiency. And remember that, if you are ever so forward and clever yourselves, you should always be modest ; for, much as you know already, there is a great deal more for you to learn."

"Yes, I know there is, till I am seventeen. But I must tell you another thing of Fanny, so odd and so stupid. Do you know, she says she does not want to learn either music or drawing ?"

"To be sure, my dear, that is very stupid indeed, and shows a great want of genius and emulation. But, all things considered, I do not know whether it is not as well that it should be so, for though you know (owing to me) your papa and mamma are so good as to bring her up with you, it is not at all necessary that she should be as accomplished as you are ; on the contrary, it is much more desirable that there should be a difference."

Such were the councils by which Mrs. Norris assisted to form her nieces' minds ; and it is not very wonderful that, with all their promising talents and early information, they should be entirely deficient in the less common acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity, and humility. In everything but disposition, they were admirably taught. Sir Thomas did not know what was wanting, because, though a truly anxious father, he was not outwardly affectionate, and the reserve of his manner repressed all the flow of their spirits before him.

Edmund consoles Fanny

[The proposal that Fanny should live with her disagreeable Aunt Norris makes the girl miserable, and, whilst the determination of her Aunt not to provide for her in this way is still unknown, Edmund Bertram endeavours to dispel his cousin's fears.]

The first event of any importance in the family was the death of Mr. Norris, which happened when Fanny was about fifteen, and necessarily introduced alterations and novelties. Mrs. Norris, on quitting the Parsonage, removed first to the Park, and afterwards to a small house of Sir Thomas's in the village, and consoled herself for the loss of her husband by considering that she could do very well without him ; and for her reduction of income by the evident necessity of stricter economy.

The living was hereafter for Edmund ; and, had his uncle died a few years sooner, it would have been duly given to some friend to hold till he were old enough for orders. But Tom's extravagance had, previous to that event, been so great, as to render a different disposal of the next presentation necessary, and the younger brother must help to pay for the pleasures of the elder. There was another family living actually held for Edmund : but though this circumstance had made the arrangement somewhat easier to Sir Thomas's conscience, he could not but feel it to be an act of injustice, and he earnestly tried to impress his eldest son with the same conviction, in the hope of its producing a better effect than anything he had yet been able to say or do.

" I blush for you, Tom," said he, in his most dignified manner, " I blush for the expedient which I am driven

on, and I trust I may pity your feelings as a brother on the occasion. You have robbed Edmund for ten, twenty, thirty years, perhaps for life, of more than half the income which ought to be his. It may hereafter be in my power, or in yours (I hope it will), to procure him better preferment ; but it must not be forgotten, that no benefit of that sort would have been beyond his natural claims on us, and that nothing can, in fact, be an equivalent for the certain advantage which he is now obliged to forego through the urgency of your debts."

Tom listened with some shame and some sorrow ; but escaping as quickly as possible, could soon with cheerful selfishness reflect, first, that he had not been half so much in debt as some of his friends ; secondly, that his father had made a most tiresome piece of work of it ; and, thirdly, that the future incumbent, whoever he might be, would, in all probability, die very soon.

On Mr. Norris's death, the presentation became the right of a Dr. Grant, who came subsequently to reside at Mansfield ; and on proving to be a hearty man of forty-five, seemed likely to disappoint Mr. Bertram's calculations. But "no, he was a short-necked, apoplectic sort of fellow, and, plied well with good things, would soon pop off."

He had a wife about fifteen years his junior, but no children ; and they entered the neighbourhood with the usual fair report of being very respectable, agreeable people.

The time was now come when Sir Thomas expected his sister-in-law to claim her share in their niece, the change in Mrs. Norris's situation, and the improvement in Fanny's age, seeming not merely to do away any former objection to their living together, but even to

give it the most decided eligibility ; and as his own circumstances were rendered less fair than heretofore, by some recent losses on his West India estate, in addition to his eldest son's extravagance, it became not undesirable to himself to be relieved from the expense of her support, and the obligation of her future provision. In the fulness of his belief that such a thing must be, he mentioned its probability to his wife ; and the first time of the subject occurring to her again, happening to be when Fanny was present, she calmly observed to her, " So, Fanny, you are going to leave us, and live with my sister. How shall you like it ? "

Fanny was too much surprised to do more than repeat her aunt's words, " Going to leave you ? "

" Yes, my dear ; why should you be astonished ? You have been five years with us, and my sister always meant to take you when Mr. Norris died. But you must come up and tack on my patterns all the same."

The news was as disagreeable to Fanny as it had been unexpected. She had never received kindness from her aunt Norris, and could not love her.

" I shall be very sorry to go away," said she, with a faltering voice.

" Yes, I dare say you will ; *that's* natural enough. I suppose you have had as little to vex you since you came into this house as any creature in the world."

" I hope I am not ungrateful, aunt," said Fanny modestly.

" No, my dear ; I hope not. I have always found you a very good girl."

" And am I never to live here again ? "

" Never, my dear ; but you are sure of a comfortable home. It can make very little difference to you, whether you are in one house or the other."

Fanny left the room with a very sorrowful heart : she could not feel the difference to be so small, she could not think of living with her aunt with anything like satisfaction. As soon as she met with Edmund, she told him her distress.

"Cousin," said she, "something is going to happen which I do not like at all ; and though you have often persuaded me into being reconciled to things that I disliked at first, you will not be able to do it now. I am going to live entirely with my aunt Norris."

"Indeed !"

"Yes ; my aunt Bertram has just told me so. It is quite settled. I am to leave Mansfield Park, and go to the White House, I suppose, as soon as she is removed there."

"Well, Fanny, and if the plan were not unpleasant to you, I should call it an excellent one."

"Oh, cousin !"

"It has everything else in its favour. My aunt is acting like a sensible woman in wishing for you. She is choosing a friend and companion exactly where she ought, and I am glad her love of money does not interfere. You will be what you ought to be to her. I hope it does not distress you very much, Fanny ?"

"Indeed it does : I cannot like it. I love this house and everything in it : I shall love nothing there. You know how uncomfortable I feel with her."

"I can say nothing for her manner to you as a child ; but it was the same with us all, or nearly so. She never knew how to be pleasant to children. But you are now of an age to be treated better ; I think she is behaving better already ; and when you are her only companion, you *must* be important to her."

"I can never be important to any one."

“What is to prevent you?”

“Everything. My situation, my foolishness, and awkwardness.”

“As to your foolishness and awkwardness, my dear Fanny, believe me, you never have a shadow of either, but in using the words so improperly. There is no reason in the world why you should not be important where you are known. You have good sense, and a sweet temper, and I am sure you have a grateful heart, that could never receive kindness without wishing to return it. I do not know any better qualifications for a friend and companion.”

“You are too kind,” said Fanny, colouring at such praise; “how shall I ever thank you as I ought for thinking so well of me? Oh! cousin, if I am to go away, I shall remember your goodness to the last moment of my life.”

“Why, indeed, Fanny, I should hope to be remembered at such a distance as the White House. You speak as if you were going two hundred miles off instead of only across the park; but you will belong to us almost as much as ever. The two families will be meeting every day in the year. The only difference will be that, living with your aunt, you will necessarily be brought forward as you ought to be. Here, there are too many whom you can hide behind; but with her you will be forced to speak for yourself.”

“Oh! do not say so.”

“I must say it, and say it with pleasure. Mrs. Norris is much better fitted than my mother for having the charge of you now. She is of a temper to do a great deal for anybody she really interests herself about, and she will force you to do justice to your natural powers.”

Fanny sighed, and said, “I cannot see things as

you do ; but I ought to believe you to be right rather than myself, and I am very much obliged to you for trying to reconcile me to what must be. If I could suppose my aunt really to care for me, it would be delightful to feel myself of consequence to anybody. Here, I know, I am of none, and yet I love the place so well."

"The place, Fanny, is what you will not quit, though you quit the house. You will have as free a command of the park and gardens as ever. Even your constant little heart need not take fright at such a nominal charge. You will have the same walks to frequent, the same library to choose from, the same people to look at, and the same horse to ride."

"Very true. Yes, dear old grey pony! Ah! cousin, when I remember how much I used to dread riding, what terrors it gave me to hear it talked of as likely to do me good—oh! how I have trembled at my uncle's opening his lips if horses were talked of—and then think of the kind pains you took to reason and persuade me out of my fears, and convince me that I should like it after a little while, and feel how right you proved to be, I am inclined to hope you may always prophesy as well."

"And I am quite convinced that your being with Mrs. Norris will be as good for your mind as riding has been for your health, and as much for your ultimate happiness too."

So ended their discourse, which, for any very appropriate service it could render Fanny, might as well have been spared, for Mrs. Norris had not the smallest intention of taking her. It had never occurred to her, on the present occasion, but as a thing to be carefully avoided. To prevent its being expected, she had fixed on the smallest habitation which

could rank as genteel among the buildings of Mansfield parish, the White House being only just large enough to receive herself and her servants, and allow a spare room for a friend, of which she made a very particular point. The spare rooms at the Parsonage had never been wanted, but the absolute necessity of a spare room for a friend was now never forgotten. Not all her precautions, however, could save her from being suspected of something better ; or, perhaps, her very display of the importance of a spare room might have misled Sir Thomas to suppose it really intended for Fanny. Lady Bertram soon brought the matter to a certainty, by carelessly observing to Mrs. Norris—

“ I think, sister, we need not keep Miss Lee any longer, when Fanny goes to live with you.”

Mrs. Norris almost started. “ Live with me, dear Lady Bertram ! what do you mean ? ”

“ Is she not to live with you ? I thought you had settled it with Sir Thomas.”

“ Me ! never. I never spoke a syllable about it to Sir Thomas, nor he to me. Fanny live with me ! the last thing in the world for me to think of, or for anybody to wish that really knows us both. Good heaven ! what could I do with Fanny ? Me ! a poor, helpless, forlorn widow, unfit for anything, my spirits quite broken down ; what could I do with a girl at her time of life ? A girl of fifteen ! the very age of all others to need most attention and care, and put the cheerfullest spirits to the test ! Sure Sir Thomas could not seriously expect such a thing ! Sir Thomas is too much my friend. Nobody that wishes me well, I am sure, would propose it. How came Sir Thomas to speak to you about it ? ”

“ Indeed, I do not know. I suppose he thought it best.”

“ But what did he say ? He could not say he wished me to take Fanny. I am sure in his heart he could not wish me to do it.”

“ No ; he only said he thought it very likely ; and I thought so too. We both thought it would be a comfort to you. But if you do not like it, there is no more to be said. She is no incumbrance here.”

“ Dear sister, if you consider my unhappy state, how can she be any comfort to me ? Here am I, a poor desolate widow, deprived of the best of husbands, my health gone in attending and nursing him, my spirits still worse, all my peace in this world destroyed, with barely enough to support me in the rank of a gentlewoman, and enable me to live so as not to disgrace the memory of the dear departed—what possible comfort could I have in taking such a charge upon me as Fanny ? If I could wish it for my own sake, I would not do so unjust a thing by the poor girl. She is in good hands, and sure of doing well. I must struggle through my sorrows and difficulties as I can.”

“ Then you will not mind living by yourself quite alone ? ”

“ Dear Lady Bertram, what am I fit for but solitude ? Now and then I shall hope to have a friend in my little cottage (I shall always have a bed for a friend) ; but the most part of my future days will be spent in utter seclusion. If I can but make both ends meet, that’s all I ask for.”

“ I hope, sister, things are not so very bad with you neither, considering Sir Thomas says you will have six hundred a year.”

“ Lady Bertram, I do not complain. I know I cannot live as I have done, but I must retrench where I can, and learn to be a better manager. I *have been* a liberal housekeeper enough, but I shall not be

ashamed to practise economy now. My situation is as much altered as my income. A great many things were due from poor Mr. Norris, as clergyman of the parish, that cannot be expected from me. It is unknown how much was consumed in our kitchen by odd comers and goers. At the White House, matters must be better looked after. I must live within my income, or I shall be miserable : and I own it would give me great satisfaction to be able to do rather more, to lay by a little at the end of the year."

" I dare say you will. You always do, don't you ? "

" My object, Lady Bertram, is to be of use to those that come after me. It is for your children's good that I wish to be richer. I have nobody else to care for ; but I should be very glad to think I could leave a little trifle among them worth their having."

" You are very good, but do not trouble yourself about them. They are sure of being well provided for. Sir Thomas will take care of that."

" Why, you know, Sir Thomas's means will be rather straitened if the Antigua estate is to make such poor returns."

" Oh ! that will soon be settled. Sir Thomas has been writing about it, I know."

" Well, Lady Bertram," said Mrs. Norris, moving to go, " I can only say that my sole desire is to be of use to your family ; and so, if Sir Thomas should ever speak again about my taking Fanny, you will be able to say that my health and spirits put it quite out of the question ; besides that, I really should not have a bed to give her, for I must keep a spare room for a friend."

Lady Bertram repeated enough of this conversation to her husband to convince him how much he had mistaken his sister-in-law's views ; and she was from

that moment perfectly safe from all expectation, or the slightest allusion to it from him. He could not but wonder at her refusing to do anything for a niece whom she had been so forward to adopt ; but, as she took early care to make him, as well as Lady Bertram, understand that whatever she possessed was designed for their family, he soon grew reconciled to a distinction which, at the same time that it was advantageous and complimentary to them, would enable him better to provide for Fanny himself.

Disturbing Elements

[The quiet life of Mansfield Park is fluttered by the arrival at the Rectory of Henry and Mary Crawford, both of whom are destined to cause great uneasiness to Fanny Price.]

Such was the state of affairs in the month of July ; and Fanny had just reached her eighteenth year, when the society of the village received an addition in the brother and sister of Mrs. Grant, a Mr. and Miss Crawford, the children of her mother by a second marriage. They were young people of fortune. The son had a good estate in Norfolk, the daughter twenty thousand pounds. As children, their sister had been always very fond of them ; but, as her own marriage had been soon followed by the death of their common parent, which left them to the care of a brother of the father, of whom Mrs. Grant knew nothing, she had scarcely seen them since. In their uncle's house they had found a kind home. Admiral and Mrs. Crawford, though agreeing in nothing else, were united in affec-

tion for these children, or, at least, were no farther adverse in their feelings than that each had their favourite, to whom they showed the greatest fondness of the two. The Admiral delighted in the boy, Mrs. Crawford doted on the girl; and it was the lady's death which now obliged her protégée, after some months' further trial at her uncle's house, to find another home. Admiral Crawford was a man of vicious conduct, who chose, instead of retaining his niece, to bring his mistress under his own roof; and to this Mrs. Grant was indebted for her sister's proposal of coming to her, a measure quite as welcome on one side as it could be expedient on the other; for Mrs. Grant, having by this time run through the usual resources of ladies residing in the country without a family of children—having more than filled her favourite sitting-room with pretty furniture, and made a choice collection of plants and poultry—was very much in want of some variety at home. The arrival, therefore, of a sister whom she had always loved, and now hoped to retain with her as long as she remained single, was highly agreeable; and her chief anxiety was, lest Mansfield should not satisfy the habits of a young woman who had been mostly used to London.

Miss Crawford was not entirely free from similar apprehensions, though they arose principally from doubts of her sister's style of living and tone of society; and it was not till after she had tried in vain to persuade her brother to settle with her at his own country house that she could resolve to hazard herself among her other relations. To anything like a permanence of abode, or limitation of society, Henry Crawford had, unluckily, a great dislike; he could not accommodate his sister in an article of such importance; but he escorted her, with the utmost kindness, into

Northamptonshire, and as readily engaged to fetch her away again, at half an hour's notice, whenever she were weary of the place.

The meeting was very satisfactory on each side. Miss Crawford found a sister without preciseness or rusticity—a sister's husband who looked the gentleman, and a house commodious and well fitted up; and Mrs. Grant received in those whom she hoped to love better than ever a young man and woman of very prepossessing appearance. Mary Crawford was remarkably pretty; Henry, though not handsome, had air and countenance; the manners of both were lively and pleasant, and Mrs. Grant immediately gave them credit for everything else. She was delighted with each, but Mary was her dearest object; and having never been able to glory in beauty of her own, she thoroughly enjoyed the power of being proud of her sister's. She had not waited her arrival to look out for a suitable match for her; she had fixed on Tom Bertram; the eldest son of a baronet was not too good for a girl of twenty thousand pounds, with all the elegance and accomplishments which Mrs. Grant foresaw in her; and being a warm-hearted, unreserved woman, Mary had not been three hours in the house before she told her what she had planned.

Miss Crawford was glad to find a family of such consequence so very near them, and not at all displeased either at her sister's early care, or the choice it had fallen on. Matrimony was her object, provided she could marry well: and having seen Mr. Bertram in town she knew that objection could no more be made to his person than to his situation in life. While she treated it as a joke, therefore, she did not forget to think of it seriously. The scheme was soon repeated to Henry.

“ And now,” added Mrs. Grant, “ I have thought of something to make it quite complete. I should dearly love to settle you both in this country ; and therefore, Henry, you shall marry the youngest Miss Bertram, a nice, handsome, good-humoured, accomplished girl, who will make you very happy.”

Henry bowed and thanked her.

“ My dear sister,” said Mary, “ if you can persuade him into anything of the sort, it will be a fresh matter of delight to me to find myself allied to anybody so clever, and I shall only regret that you have not half a dozen daughters to dispose of. If you can persuade Henry to marry, you must have the address of a Frenchwoman. All that English abilities can do has been tried already. I have three very particular friends who have been all dying for him in their turn ; and the pains which they, their mothers (very clever women), as well as my dear aunt and myself, have taken to reason, coax, or trick him into marrying is inconceivable ! He is the most horrible flirt that can be imagined. If your Miss Bertrams do not like to have their hearts broken, let them avoid Henry.”

“ My dear brother, I will not believe this of you.”

“ No, I am sure you are too good. You will be kinder than Mary. You will allow for the doubts of youth and inexperience. I am of a cautious nature, and unwilling to risk my happiness in a hurry. Nobody can think more highly of the matrimonial state than myself. I consider the blessing of a wife as most justly described in those discreet lines of the poet, ‘ Heaven’s *last* best gift.’”

“ There, Mrs. Grant, you see how he dwells on one word, and only look at his smile. I assure you he is very detestable ; the Admiral’s lessons have quite spoiled him.”

"I pay very little regard," said Mrs. Grant, "to what any young person says on the subject of marriage. If they profess a disinclination for it, I only set it down that they have not yet seen the right person."

Dr. Grant laughingly congratulated Miss Crawford on feeling no disinclination to the state herself.

"Oh yes! I am not at all ashamed of it. I would have everybody marry if they can do it properly: I do not like to have people throw themselves away; but everybody should marry as soon as they can do it to advantage."

The Sorrows of Fanny

[Loving her cousin Edmund, Fanny is made very unhappy by his obvious fondness for Mary Crawford; she also suffers in health by want of exercise, the horse she habitually rode having been placed by Edmund at Mary's disposal.]

Between ten and eleven Edmund and Julia walked into the drawing-room, fresh with the evening air, glowing and cheerful, the very reverse of what they found in the three ladies sitting there, for Maria would scarcely raise her eyes from her book, and Lady Bertram was half asleep; and even Mrs. Norris, discomposed by her niece's ill-humour, and having asked one or two questions about the dinner, which were not immediately attended to, seemed almost determined to say no more. For a few minutes the brother and sister were too eager in their praise of the night and their remarks on the stars to think beyond themselves; but when the first pause came, Edmund,

looking around, said, "But where is Fanny? Is she gone to bed?"

"No, not that I know of," replied Mrs. Norris; "she was here a moment ago."

Her own gentle voice, speaking from the other end of the room, which was a very long one, told them that she was on the sofa. Mrs. Norris began scolding.

"That is a very foolish trick, Fanny, to be idling away all the evening upon a sofa. Why cannot you come and sit here, and employ yourself as *we* do? If you have no work of your own, I can supply you from the poor basket. There is all the new calico, that was bought last week, not touched yet. I am sure I almost broke my back by cutting it out. You should learn to think of other people: and take my word for it, it is a shocking trick for a young person to be always lolling upon a sofa."

Before half this was said Fanny returned to her seat at the table, and had taken up her work again; and Julia, who was in high good-humour from the pleasures of the day, did her the justice of exclaiming, "I must say, ma'am, that Fanny is as little upon the sofa as anybody in the house."

"Fanny," said Edmund, after looking at her attentively, "I am sure you have the headache."

She could not deny it, but said it was not very bad.

"I can hardly believe you," he replied; "I know your looks too well. How long have you had it?"

"Since a little before dinner. It is nothing but the heat."

"Did you go out in the heat?"

"Go out! to be sure she did," said Mrs. Norris: "would you have her stay within such a fine day as this? Were not we *all* out? Even your mother was out to-day for above an hour."

"Yes, indeed, Edmund," added her ladyship, who had been thoroughly awakened by Mrs. Norris's sharp reprimand to Fanny; "I was out above an hour. I sat three-quarters of an hour in the flower-garden, while Fanny cut the roses, and very pleasant it was, I assure you, but very hot. It was shady enough in the alcove, but I declare I quite dreaded the coming home again."

"Fanny has been cutting roses, has she?"

"Yes, and I am afraid they will be the last this year. Poor thing! *She* found it hot enough; but they were so full blown that one could not wait."

"There was no help for it, certainly," rejoined Mrs. Norris, in a rather softened voice; "but I question whether her headache might not be caught *then*, sister. There is nothing so likely to give it as standing and stooping in a hot sun; but I dare say it will be well to-morrow. Suppose you let her have your aromatic vinegar; I always forget to have mine filled."

"She has got it," said Lady Bertram: "she has had it ever since she came back from your house the second time."

"What!" cried Edmund; "has she been walking as well as cutting roses; walking across the hot park to your house, and doing it twice, ma'am? No wonder her head aches."

Mrs. Norris was talking to Julia, and did not hear.

"I was afraid it would be too much for her," said Lady Bertram; "but when the roses were gathered your aunt wished to have them, and then, you know, they must be taken home."

"But were there roses enough to oblige her to go twice?"

"No; but they were to be put into the spare room

to dry ; and, unluckily, Fanny forgot to lock the door of the room and bring away the key, so she was obliged to go again."

Edmund got up and walked about the room, saying, " And could nobody be employed on such an errand but Fanny ? Upon my word, ma'am, it has been a very ill-managed business."

" I am sure I do not know how it was to have been done better," cried Mrs. Norris, unable to be longer deaf ; " unless I had gone myself, indeed, but I cannot be in two places at once ; and I was talking to Mr. Green at that very time about your mother's dairy-maid, by her desire, and had promised John Groom to write to Mr. Jefferies about his son, and the poor fellow was waiting for me half an hour. I think nobody can justly accuse me of sparing myself upon any occasion, but really I cannot do everything at once. And as for Fanny's just stepping down to my house for me—it is not much above a quarter of a mile—I cannot think I was unreasonable to ask it. How often do I pace it three times a day, early and late, ay, and in all weathers too, and say nothing about it ?"

" I wish Fanny had half your strength, ma'am."

" If Fanny would be more regular in her exercise she would not be knocked up so soon. She has not been out on horseback now this long while, and I am persuaded that when she does not ride she ought to walk. If she had been riding before I should not have asked it of her. But I thought it would rather do her good after being stooping among the roses ; for there is nothing so refreshing as a walk after a fatigue of that kind, and though the sun was strong, it was not so very hot. Between ourselves, Edmund," nodding significantly at his mother, " it was cutting the roses

and dawdling about in the flower-garden that did the mischief."

"I am afraid it was, indeed," said the more candid Lady Bertram, who had overheard her; "I am very much afraid she caught the headache there, for the heat was enough to kill anybody. It was as much as I could bear myself. Sitting and calling to pug, and trying to keep him from the flower-beds, was almost too much for me."

Edmund said no more to either lady; but going quietly to another table, on which the supper tray yet remained, brought a glass of Madeira to Fanny, and obliged her to drink the greater part. She wished to be able to decline it; but the tears, which a variety of feelings created, made it easier to swallow than to speak.

Vexed as Edmund was with his mother and aunt, he was still more angry with himself. His own forgetfulness of her was worse than anything which they had done. Nothing of this would have happened had she been properly considered; but she had been left four days together without any choice of companions or exercise, and without any excuse for avoiding whatever her unreasonable aunts might require. He was ashamed to think that for four days together she had not had the power of riding, and very seriously resolved, however unwilling he must be to check a pleasure of Miss Crawford's, that it should never happen again.

Fanny went to bed with her heart as full as on the first evening of her arrival at the Park. The state of her spirits had probably had its share in her indisposition; for she had been feeling neglected, and been struggling against discontent and envy for some days past. As she leant on the sofa, to which she had

retreated that she might not be seen, the pain of her mind had been much beyond that in her head ; and the sudden change which Edmund's kindness had then occasioned made her hardly know how to support herself.

The Amateur Actors

[During the absence of Sir Thomas Bertram, who has made a voyage to see his estates in Antigua, a frivolous visitor, Mr. Yates, incites the young Bertrams to get up a play. Edmund opposes the idea, and Fanny tries to comfort him by expressing her doubt whether a suitable play will be found. In the end, both Edmund and Fanny are induced to help in the rehearsals of the piece selected.]

Fanny seemed nearer being right than Edmund had supposed. The business of finding a play that would suit everybody proved to be no trifle, and the carpenter had received his orders and taken his measurements, had suggested and removed at least two sets of difficulties, and having made the necessity of an enlargement of plan an expense fully evident, was already at work, while a play was still to seek. Other preparations were also in hand. An enormous roll of green baize had arrived from Northampton, and been cut out by Mrs. Norris (with a saving by her good management, of full three quarters of a yard), and was actually forming into a curtain by the housemaids, and still the play was wanting ; and as two or three days passed away in this manner, Edmund began almost to hope that none might ever be found.

There were, in fact, so many things to be attended

to, so many people to be pleased, so many best characters required, and above all, such a need that the play should be at once both tragedy and comedy, that there did seem as little chance of a decision as anything pursued by youth and zeal could hold out.

On the tragic side were the Miss Bertrams, Henry Crawford and Mr. Yates ; on the comic, Tom Bertram, not *quite* alone, because it was evident that Mary Crawford's wishes, though politely kept back, inclined the same way : but his determinateness and his power seemed to make allies unnecessary ; and, independent of this great irreconcilable difference, they wanted a piece containing very few characters in the whole, but every character first-rate, and three principal women. All the best plays were run over in vain. Neither *Hamlet*, nor *Macbeth*, nor *Othello*, nor *Douglas*, nor the *Gamester* presented anything that could satisfy even the tragedians ; and the *Rivals*, the *School for Scandal*, *Wheel of Fortune*, *Heir-at-Law*, and a long *et cetera*, were successively dismissed with yet warmer objections. No piece could be proposed that did not supply somebody with a difficulty, and on one side or the other it was a continual repetition of, " Oh, no, *that* will never do ! Let us have no ranting tragedies. Too many characters. Not a tolerable woman's part in the play. Anything but *that*, my dear Tom. It would be impossible to fill it up. One could not expect anybody to take such a part. Nothing but buffoonery from beginning to end. *That* might do, perhaps, but for the low parts. If I *must* give my opinion, I have always thought it the most insipid play in the English language. I do not wish to make objections ; I shall be happy to be of any use, but I think we could not choose worse."

Fanny looked on and listened, not unamused to

observe the selfishness which, more or less disguised, seemed to govern them all, and wondering how it would end. For her own gratification, she could have wished that something might be acted, for she had never seen even half a play, but everything of higher consequence was against it.

"This will never do," said Tom Bertram at last. "We are wasting time most abominably. Something must be fixed on. No matter what, so that something is chosen. We must not be so nice. A few characters too many must not frighten us. We must *double* them. We must descend a little. If a part is insignificant, the greater our credit in making anything of it. From this moment *I* make no difficulties. I take any part you choose to give me, so as it be comic. Let it but be comic, I condition for nothing more."

For about the fifth time he then proposed the *Heir-at-Law*, doubting only whether to prefer Lord Duberley or Dr. Pangloss for himself; and very earnestly, but very unsuccessfully, trying to persuade the others that there were some fine tragic parts in the rest of the *dramatis personæ*.

The pause which followed this fruitless effort was ended by the same speaker, who taking up one of the many volumes of plays that lay on the table, and turning it over, suddenly exclaimed,—"*Lovers' Vows!* And why should not *Lovers' Vows* do for *us* as well as for the Ravenshaws? How came it never to be thought of before? It strikes me as if it would do exactly. What say you all? Here are two capital tragic parts for Yates and Crawford, and here is the rhyming Butler for me, if nobody else wants it; a trifling part, but the sort of thing I should not dislike, and, as I said before, I am determined to take anything and do my best. And as for the rest, they may be

filled up by anybody. It is only Count Cassel and Anhalt."

The suggestion was generally welcome. Everybody was growing weary of indecision, and the first idea with everybody was, that nothing had been proposed before so likely to suit them all. Mr. Yates was particularly pleased; he had been sighing and longing to do the Baron at Ecclesford, had grudged every rant of Lord Ravenshaw's, and been forced to re-rant it all in his own room. To storm through Baron Wildenheim was the height of his theatrical ambition; and with the advantage of knowing half the scenes by heart already, he did now, with the greatest alacrity, offer his services for the part. To do him justice, however, he did not resolve to appropriate it; for remembering that there was some very good ranting ground in Frederick, he professed an equal willingness for that. Henry Crawford was ready to take either. Whichever Mr. Yates did not choose would perfectly satisfy him, and a short parley of compliment ensued. Miss Bertram, feeling all the interest of an Agatha in the question, took on her to decide it, by observing to Mr. Yates, that this was a point in which height and figure ought to be considered, and that *his* being the tallest, seemed to fit him peculiarly for the Baron. She was acknowledged to be quite right, and the two parts being accepted accordingly, she was certain of the proper Frederick. Three of the character were now cast, besides Mr. Rushworth, who was always answered for by Maria as willing to do any thing, when Julia, meaning, like her sister, to be Agatha, began to be scrupulous on Miss Crawford's account.

"This is not behaving well by the absent," said she.
"Here are not women enough. Amelia and Agatha

may do for Maria and me, but here is nothing for your sister, Mr. Crawford."

Mr. Crawford desired *that* might not be thought of ; he was very sure his sister had no wish of acting, but as she might be useful, and that she would not allow herself to be considered in the present case. But this was immediately opposed by Tom Bertram, who asserted the part of Amelia to be in every respect the property of Miss Crawford, if she would accept it. "It falls as naturally as necessarily to her," said he, "as Agatha does to one or other of my sisters. It can be no sacrifice on their side, for it is highly comic."

A short silence followed. Each sister looked anxious ; for each felt the best claim to Agatha, and was hoping to have it pressed on her by the rest. Henry Crawford, who meanwhile had taken up the play, and with seeming carelessness was turning over the first act, soon settled the business.

"I must entreat Miss *Julia* Bertram," said he, "not to engage in the part of Agatha, or it will be the ruin of all my solemnity. You must not, indeed you must not (turning to her). I could not stand your countenance dressed up in woe and paleness. The many laughs we have had together would infallibly come across me, and Frederick and his knapsack would be obliged to run away."

Pleasantly, courteously, it was spoken ; but the manner was lost in the matter to Julia's feelings. She saw a glance at Maria, which confirmed the injury to herself ; it was a scheme, a trick ; she was slighted, Maria was preferred ; the smile of triumph which Maria was trying to suppress showed how well it was understood ; and before Julia could command herself

enough to speak, her brother gave his weight against her too, by saying, " Oh yes ! Maria must be Agatha. Maria will be the best Agatha. Though Julia fancies she prefers tragedy, I would not trust her in it. There is nothing of tragedy about her. She has not the look of it. Her features are not tragic features, and she walks too quick, and speaks too quick, and would not keep her countenance. She had better do the old countrywoman—the Cottager's wife ; you had, indeed, Julia. Cottager's wife is a very pretty part, I assure you. The old lady relieves the high-flown benevolence of her husband with a good deal of spirit. You shall be the Cottager's wife."

" Cottager's wife ! " cried Mr. Yates. " What are you talking of ? The most trivial, paltry, insignificant part ; the merest commonplace ; not a tolerable speech in the whole. Your sister do that ! It is an insult to propose it. At Ecclesford the governess was to have done it. We all agreed that it could not be offered to anybody else. A little more justice, Mr. Manager, if you please. You do not deserve the office if you cannot appreciate the talents of your company a little better."

" Why as to *that*, my good friend, till I and my company have really acted there must be some guesswork ; but I mean no disparagement to Julia. We cannot have two Agathas, and we must have one Cottager's wife ; and I am sure I set her the example of moderation myself in being satisfied with the old Butler. If the part is trifling she will have more credit in making something of it ; and if she is so desperately bent against everything humorous, let her take Cottager's speeches instead of Cottager's wife's, and so change the parts all through ; *he* is solemn and pathetic enough, I am sure. It could make no difference in the

play ; and as for Cottager himself, when he has got his wife's speeches, *I* would undertake him with all my heart."

"With all your partiality for Cottager's wife," said Henry Crawford, "it will be impossible to make anything of it fit for your sister, and we must not suffer her good nature to be imposed on. We must not *allow* her to accept the part. She must not be left to her own complaisance. Her talents will be wanted in Amelia. Amelia is a character more difficult to be well represented than even Agatha. I consider Amelia is the most difficult character in the whole piece. It requires great powers, great nicety, to give her playfulness and simplicity without extravagance. I have seen good actresses fail in the part. Simplicity, indeed, is beyond the reach of almost every actress by profession. It requires a delicacy of feeling which they have not. It requires a gentlewoman—a Julia Bertram. You *will* undertake it, I hope?" turning to her with a look of anxious entreaty, which softened her a little ; but while she hesitated what to say her brother again interposed with Miss Crawford's better claim.

"No, no, Julia must not be Amelia. It is not at all the part for her. She would not like it. She would not do well. She is too tall and robust. Amelia should be a small, light, girlish, skipping figure. It is fit for Miss Crawford, and Miss Crawford only. She looks the part, and I am persuaded will do it admirably."

Without attending to this, Henry Crawford continued his supplication. "You must oblige us," said he, "indeed you must. When you have studied the character I am sure you will feel it suit you. Tragedy may be your choice, but it will certainly appear that

comedy chooses *you*. You will have to visit me in prison with a basket of provisions ; you will not refuse to visit me in prison ? I think I see you coming in with your basket."

The influence of his voice was felt. Julia wavered ; but was he only trying to soothe and pacify her, and make her overlook the previous affront ? She distrusted him. The slight had been most determined. He was, perhaps, but at treacherous play with her. She looked suspiciously at her sister ; Maria's countenance was to decide it ; if she were vexed and alarmed—but Maria looked all serenity and satisfaction, and Julia well knew that on this ground Maria could not be happy but at her expense. With hasty indignation, therefore, and a tremulous voice, she said to him, " You do not seem afraid of not keeping your countenance when I come in with a basket of provisions—though one might have supposed—but it is only as Agatha that I was to be so overpowering ! " She stopped, Henry Crawford looked rather foolish, and as if he did not know what to say. Tom Bertram began again—

" Miss Crawford must be Amelia. She will be an excellent Amelia."

" Do not be afraid of *my* wanting the character," cried Julia, with angry quickness : " I am *not* to be Agatha, and I am sure I will do nothing else ; and as to Amelia, it is of all parts in the world the most disgusting to me. I quite detest her. An odious, little, pert, unnatural, impudent girl. I have always protested against comedy, and this is comedy in its worst form." And so saying, she walked hastily out of the room, leaving awkward feelings to more than one, but exciting small compassion in any except Fanny, who had been a quiet auditor of the whole,

and who could not think of her as under the agitations of *jealousy* without great pity.

A short silence succeeded her leaving them ; but her brother soon returned to business and *Lovers' Vows*, and was eagerly looking over the play, with Mr. Yates' help, to ascertain what scenery would be necessary, while Maria and Henry Crawford conversed together in an under voice, and the declaration with which she began of, " I am sure I would give up the part to Julia most willingly, but that though I shall probably do it very ill, I feel persuaded *she* would do it worse," was doubtless receiving all the compliments it called for.

When this had lasted some time, the division of the party was completed by Tom Bertram and Mr. Yates walking off together to consult farther in the room now beginning to be called *the Theatre*, and Miss Bertram's resolving to go down to the Parsonage herself with the offer of Amelia to Miss Crawford ; and Fanny remained alone.

The first use she made of her solitude was to take up the volume which had been left on the table, and begin to acquaint herself with the play of which she had heard so much. Her curiosity was all awake, and she ran through it with an eagerness which was suspended only by intervals of astonishment, that it could be chosen in the present instance, that it could be proposed and accepted in a private theatre ! Agatha and Amelia appeared to her in their different ways so totally improper for home representation ; the situation of one, and the language of the other, so unfit to be expressed by any woman of modesty, that she could hardly suppose her cousins could be aware of what they were engaging in ; and longed to have them roused as soon as possible by the remonstrance which Edmund would certainly make.

The Actors Discomfited

[In the midst of the rehearsals Sir Thomas Bertram returns home before he is expected.]

How is the consternation of the party to be described? To the greater number it was a moment of absolute horror. Sir Thomas in the house! All felt the instantaneous conviction. Not a hope of imposition or mistake was harboured anywhere. Julia's looks were an evidence of the fact that made it indisputable; and after the first starts and exclamations, not a word was spoken for half a minute; each with an altered countenance was looking at some other, and almost each was feeling it a stroke the most unwelcome, most ill-timed, most appalling! Mr. Yates might consider it only as a vexatious interruption for the evening, and Mr. Rushworth might imagine it a blessing; but every other heart was sinking under some degree of self-condemnation or undefined alarm, every other heart was suggesting, "What will become of us? what is to be done now?" It was a terrible pause; and terrible to every ear were the corroborating sounds of opening doors and passing footsteps.

Julia was the first to move and speak again. Jealousy and bitterness had been suspended: selfishness was lost in the common cause; but at the moment of her appearance, Frederick was listening with looks of devotion to Agatha's narrative, and pressing her hand to his heart; and as soon as she could notice this, and see that, in spite of the shock of her words, he still kept his station and retained her sister's hand, her wounded heart swelled again with injury, and looking as red as she had been white before, she turned out

of the room, saying, "*I need not be afraid of appearing before him.*"

Her going roused the rest ; and at the same moment the two brothers stepped forward, feeling the necessity of doing something. A very few words between them were sufficient. The case admitted no difference of opinion ; they must go to the drawing-room directly. Maria joined them with the same intent, just then the stoutest of the three ; for the very circumstance which had driven Julia away was to her the sweetest support. Henry Crawford's retaining her hand at such a moment, a moment of such peculiar proof and importance, was worth ages of doubt and anxiety. She hailed it as an earnest of the most serious determination, and was equal even to encounter her father. They walked off, utterly heedless of Mr. Rushworth's repeated question of, "*Shall I go too ? Had not I better go too ? Will not it be right for me to go too ?*" but they were no sooner through the door than Henry Crawford undertook to answer the anxious inquiry, and, encouraging him by all means to pay his respects to Sir Thomas without delay, sent him after the others with delighted haste.

Fanny was left with only the Crawfords and Mr. Yates. She had been quite overlooked by her cousins ; and as her own opinion of her claims on Sir Thomas's affection was much too humble to give her any idea of classing herself with his children, she was glad to remain behind and gain a little breathing-time. Her agitation and alarm exceeded all that was endured by the rest, by the right of a disposition which not even innocence could keep from suffering. She was nearly fainting ; all her former habitual dread of her uncle was returning, and with it compassion for him and for almost every one of the party on the development

before him, with solicitude on Edmund's account indescribable. She had found a seat, where in excessive trembling she was enduring all those fearful thoughts, while the other three, no longer under any restraint, were giving vent to their feelings of vexation, lamenting over such an unlooked-for premature arrival as a most untoward event, and without mercy wishing poor Sir Thomas had been twice as long on his passage, or were still in Antigua.

The Crawfords were more warm on the subject than Mr. Yates, from better understanding the family, and judging more clearly of the mischief that must ensue. The ruin of the play was to them a certainty; they felt the total destruction of the scheme to be inevitably at hand; while Mr. Yates considered it only as a temporary interruption, a disaster for the evening and could even suggest the possibility of the rehearsal being renewed after tea, when the bustle of receiving Sir Thomas was over, and he might be at leisure to be amused by it. The Crawfords laughed at the idea; and having soon agreed on the propriety of their walking quietly home and leaving the family to themselves, proposed Mr. Yates's accompanying them and spending the evening at the Parsonage. But Mr. Yates, having never been with those who thought much of parental claims or family confidence, could not perceive that anything of the kind was necessary; and, therefore, thanking them, said "he preferred remaining where he was, that he might pay his respects to the old gentleman handsomely, since he *was* come; and besides, he did not think it would be fair by the others to have everybody run away."

Fanny was just beginning to collect herself, and to feel that if she stayed longer behind, it might seem disrespectful when this point was settled, and being

commissioned with the brother and sister's apology, saw them preparing to go as she quitted the room herself to perform the dreadful duty of appearing before her uncle.

Too soon did she find herself at the drawing-room door ; and after pausing a moment for what she knew would not come, for a courage which the outside of no door had ever supplied to her, she turned the lock in desperation, and the lights of the drawing-room, and all the collected family, were before her. As she entered her own name caught her ear. Sir Thomas was at that moment looking round him, and saying, " But where is Fanny ? Why do I not see my little Fanny ? "—and, on perceiving her, came forward with a kindness which astonished and penetrated her, calling her his dear Fanny, kissing her affectionately, and observing with decided pleasure how much she was grown ! Fanny knew not how to feel, nor where to look. She was quite oppressed. He had never been so kind, so *very* kind to her in his life. His manner seemed changed, his voice was quick from the agitation of joy ; and all that had been awful in his dignity seemed lost in tenderness. He led her nearer the light and looked at her again—inquired particularly after her health, and then correcting himself, observe, that he need *not* inquire, for her appearance spoke sufficiently on that point. A fine blush having succeeded the previous paleness of her face, he was justified in his belief of her equal improvement in health and beauty. He inquired next after her family, especially William ; and his kindness altogether was such as made her reproach herself for loving him so little, and thinking his return a misfortune ; and when, on having courage to lift her eyes to his face, she saw that he was grown thinner, and had the burnt,

fagged, worn look of fatigue and a hot climate, every tender feeling was increased, and she was miserable in considering how much unsuspected vexation was probably ready to burst on him.

Sir Thomas was indeed the life of the party, who at his suggestion now seated themselves round the fire. He had the best right to be the talker ; and the delight of his sensations in being again in his own house, in the centre of his family, after such a separation, made him communicative and chatty in a very unusual degree ; and he was ready to give every information as to his voyage, and answer every question of his two sons almost before it was put. His business in Antigua had latterly been prosperously rapid, and he came directly from Liverpool, having had an opportunity of making his passage thither in a private vessel instead of waiting for the packet ; and all the little particulars of his proceedings and events, his arrivals and departures, were most promptly delivered, as he sat by Lady Bertram, and looked with heartfelt satisfaction on the faces around him—interrupting himself more than once, however, to remark on his good fortune in finding them all at home—coming unexpectedly as he did—all collected together exactly as he could have wished, but dared not depend on. Mr. Rushworth was not forgotten ; a most friendly reception and warmth of hand-shaking had already met him, and with pointed attention he was now included in the objects most intimately connected with Mansfield. There was nothing disagreeable in Mr. Rushworth's appearance, and Sir Thomas was liking him already.

By not one of the circle was he listened to with such unbroken, unalloyed enjoyment as by his wife, who was really extremely happy to see him, and whose

feelings were so warmed by his sudden arrival as to place her nearer agitation than she had been for the last twenty years. She had been *almost* fluttered for a few minutes, and still remained so sensibly animated as to put away her work, move pug from her side, and give all her attention and all the rest of her sofa to her husband. She had no anxieties for anybody to cloud *her* pleasure ; her own time had been irreproachably spent during his absence ; she had done a great deal of carpet work, and made many yards of fringe ; and she would have answered as freely for the good conduct and useful pursuits of all the young people as for her own. It was so agreeable to her to see him again, and hear him talk, to have her ear amused and her whole comprehension filled by his narratives, that she began particularly to feel how dreadfully she must have missed him, and how impossible it would have been for her to bear a lengthened absence.

Mrs. Norris was by no means to be compared in happiness to her sister. Not that *she* was incommoded by many fears of Sir Thomas's disapprobation when her present state of his house should be known, for her judgment had been so blinded that, except by the instinctive caution with which she had whisked away Mr. Rushworth's pink satin cloak as her brother-in-law entered, she could hardly be said to show any sign of alarm ; but she was vexed by the *manner* of his return. It had left her nothing to do. Instead of being sent for out of the room, and seeing him first, and having to spread the happy news through the house, Sir Thomas, with a very reasonable dependence, perhaps, on the nerves of his wife and children, had sought no confidant but the butler, and had been following him almost instantaneously into the drawing-

room. Mrs. Norris felt herself defrauded of an office on which she had always depended, whether his arrival or his death were to be the thing unfolded; and was now trying to be in a bustle without having anything to bustle about, and labouring to be important where nothing was wanted but tranquillity and silence. Would Sir Thomas have consented to eat, she might have gone to the housekeeper with troublesome directions, and insulted the footman with injunctions of despatch; but Sir Thomas resolutely declined all dinner: he would take nothing, nothing till tea came—he would rather wait for tea. Still Mrs. Norris was at intervals urging something different; and in the most interesting moment of his passage to England, when the alarm of a French privateer was at the height, she burst through his recital with the proposal of soup. “Sure, my dear Sir Thomas, a basin of soup would be a much better thing for you than tea. Do have a basin of soup.”

Sir Thomas could not be provoked. “Still the same anxiety for everybody’s comfort, my dear Mrs. Norris,” was his answer. “But indeed I would rather have nothing but tea.”

“Well, then, Lady Bertram, suppose you speak for tea directly; suppose you hurry Baddeley; he seems behindhand to-night?” She carried this point, and Sir Thomas’s narrative proceeded.

At length there was a pause. His immediate communications were exhausted, and it seemed enough to be looking joyfully around him, now at one, now at another of the beloved circle; but the pause was not long; in the elation of her spirits Lady Bertram became talkative, and what were the sensations of her children upon hearing her say, “How do you think the young people have been amusing themselves

lately, Sir Thomas? They have been acting. We have been all alive with acting."

"Indeed! and what have you been acting?"

"Oh! they'll tell you all about it."

"The all will be soon told," cried Tom, hastily, and with affected unconcern; "but it is not worth while to bore my father with it now. You will hear enough of it to-morrow, sir. We have just been trying, by way of doing something, and amusing my mother, just within the last week, to get up a few scenes, a mere trifle. We have had such incessant rains almost since October began that we have been nearly confined to the house for days together. I have hardly taken out a gun since the 3rd. Tolerable sport the first three days, but there has been no attempting anything since. The first day I went over Mansfield Wood, and Edmund took the copses beyond Easton, and we brought home six brace between us, and might each have killed six times as many; but we respect your pheasants, sir, I assure you, as much as you could desire. I do not think you will find your woods by any means worse stocked than they were. I never saw Mansfield Wood so full of pheasants in my life as this year. I hope you will take a day's sport there yourself, sir, soon."

For the present the danger was over, and Fanny's sick feelings subsided; but when tea was soon afterwards brought in, and Sir Thomas, getting up, said that he found that he could not be any longer in the house without just looking into his own dear room, every agitation was returning. He was gone before anything had been said to prepare him for the change he must find there; and a pause of alarm followed his disappearance. Edmund was the first to speak:

"Something must be done," said he.

“It is time to think of our visitors,” said Maria, still feeling her hand pressed to Henry Crawford’s heart, and caring little for anything else. “Where did you leave Miss Crawford, Fanny?”

Fanny told of their departure, and delivered their message.

“Then poor Yates is all alone,” cried Tom. “I will go and fetch him. He will be no bad assistant when it all comes out.”

To the theatre he went, and reached it just in time to witness the first meeting of his father and his friend. Sir Thomas had been a good deal surprised to find candles burning in his room; and on casting his eye round it to see other symptoms of recent habitation and a general air of confusion in the furniture. The removal of the bookcase from the billiard-room door struck him especially, but he had scarcely more than time to feel astonished at all this, before there were sounds from the billiard-room to astonish him still further. Some one was talking there in a very loud accent; he did not know the voice—more than talking—almost hallooing. He stepped to the door, rejoicing at that moment in having the means of immediate communication, and, opening it, found himself on the stage of a theatre, and opposed to a ranting young man, who appeared likely to knock him down backwards. At the very moment of Yates perceiving Sir Thomas, and giving perhaps the very best start he had ever given in the whole course of his rehearsals, Tom Bertram entered at the other end of the room; and never had he found greater difficulty in keeping his countenance. His father’s looks of solemnity and amazement on this, his first appearance on any stage, and the gradual metamorphosis of the impassioned Baron Wildenheim into the well-bred and easy Mr.

Yates, making his bow and apology to Sir Thomas Bertram, was such an exhibition, such a piece of true acting, as he would not have lost upon any account. It would be the last—in all probability—the last scene on that stage ; but he was sure there could not be a finer. The house would close with the greatest *éclat*.

There was little time, however, for the indulgence of any images of merriment. It was necessary for him to step forward, too, and assist the introduction, and with many awkward sensations he did his best. Sir Thomas received Mr. Yates with all the appearance of cordiality which was due to his own character, but was really as far from pleased with the necessity of the acquaintance as with the manner of its commencement. Mr. Yates's family and connections were sufficiently known to him to render his introduction as the "particular friend," another of the hundred particular friends of his son, exceedingly unwelcome ; and it needed all the felicity of being again at home, and all the forbearance it could supply, to save Sir Thomas from anger on finding himself thus bewildered in his own house, making part of a ridiculous exhibition in the midst of theatrical nonsense, and forced in so untoward a moment to admit the acquaintance of a young man whom he felt sure of disapproving and whose easy indifference and volubility in the course of the first five minutes seemed to mark him the most at home of the two.

Tom understood his father's thoughts, and heartily wishing he might be always as well disposed to give them but partial expression began to see more clearly than he had ever done before, that there might be some ground of offence, that there might be some reason for the glance his father gave towards the

ceiling and stucco of the room ; and that when he inquired with mild gravity after the fate of the billiard-table he was not proceeding beyond a very allowable curiosity. A few minutes were enough for such unsatisfactory sensations on each side ; and Sir Thomas, having exerted himself so far as to speak a few words of calm approbation in reply to an eager appeal of Mr. Yates, as to the happiness of the arrangement, the three gentlemen returned to the drawing-room together, Sir Thomas with an increase of gravity which was not lost on all.

“ I come from your theatre,” said he, composedly, as he sat down ; “ I found myself in it rather unexpectedly. Its vicinity to my own room—but in every respect, indeed, it took me by surprise, as I had not the smallest suspicion of your acting having assumed so serious a character. It appears a neat job, however, as far as I could judge by candlelight, and does my friend, Christopher Jackson, credit.” And then he would have changed the subject, and sipped his coffee in peace over domestic matters of a calmer hue ; but Mr. Yates, without discernment to catch Sir Thomas’s meaning, or diffidence, or delicacy, or discretion enough to allow him to lead the discourse while he mingled among the others with the least obtrusiveness himself, would keep him on the topic of the theatre, would torment him with questions and remarks relative to it, and finally would make him hear the whole history of his disappointment at Ecclesford. Sir Thomas listened most politely, but found much to offend his ideas of decorum, and confirm his ill opinion of Mr. Yates’s habits of thinking, from the beginning to the end of the story ; and when it was over, could give him no other assurance of sympathy than what a slight bow conveyed.

“ This was, in fact, the origin of *our* acting,” said Tom, after a moment’s thought. “ My friend Yates brought the infection from Ecclesford, and it spread—as those things always spread, you know, sir—the faster, probably from *your* having so often encouraged the sort of thing in us formerly. It was like treading old ground again”

Mr. Yates took the subject from his friend as soon as possible, and immediately gave Sir Thomas an account of what they had done and were doing ; told him of the gradual increase of their views, the happy conclusion of their first difficulties, and present promising state of affairs ; relating everything with so blind an interest as made him not only totally unconscious of the uneasy movements of many of his friends as they sat, the change of countenance, the fidget, the hem ! of unquietness, but prevented him even from seeing the expression of the face on which his own eyes were fixed—from seeing Sir Thomas’s dark brow contract as he looked with inquiring earnestness at his daughters and Edmund, dwelling particularly on the latter, and speaking a language, a remonstrance, a reproof, which *he* felt at his heart. Not less acutely was it felt by Fanny, who had edged back her chair behind her aunt’s end of the sofa, and, screened from notice herself, saw all that was passing before her. Such a look of reproach at Edmund from his father she could never have expected to witness ; and to feel that it was in any degree deserved was an aggravation indeed. Sir Thomas’s look implied, “ On your judgment, Edmund, I depended ; what have you been about ? ” She knelt in spirit to her uncle, and her bosom swelled to utter, “ Oh, not to *him* ! Look so to all the others, but not to *him* ! ”

Mr. Yates was still talking. “ To own the truth,

Sir Thomas, we were in the middle of a rehearsal when you arrived this evening. We were going through the three first acts, and not unsuccessfully upon the whole. Our company is now so dispersed, from the Crawfords being gone home, that nothing more can be done to-night ; but if you will give us the honour of your company to-morrow evening I should not be afraid of the result. We bespeak your indulgence, you understand, as young performers ; we bespeak your indulgence."

"My indulgence shall be given, sir," replied Sir Thomas gravely, "but without any other rehearsal." And with a relenting smile he added, "I come home to be happy and indulgent." Then turning away towards any or all of the rest, he tranquilly said, "Mr. and Miss Crawford were mentioned in my last letters from Mansfield. Do you find them agreeable acquaintances ?"

Tom was the only one at all ready with an answer, but he being entirely without particular regard for either, without jealousy either in love or acting, could speak very handsomely of both. "Mr. Crawford was a most pleasant gentlemanlike man ; his sister a sweet, pretty, elegant, lively girl."

Mr. Rushworth could be silent no longer. "I do not say he is not gentlemanlike, considering ; but you should tell your father he is not above five feet eight, or he will be expecting a well-looking man."

Sir Thomas did not quite understand this, and looked with some surprise at the speaker.

"If I must say what I think," continued Mr. Rushworth, "in my opinion it is very disagreeable to be always rehearsing. It is having too much of a good thing. I am not so fond of acting as I was at first. I think we are a great deal better employed,

sitting comfortably here among ourselves, and doing nothing."

Sir Thomas looked again and then replied with an approving smile, "I am happy to find our sentiments on this subject so much the same. It gives me sincere satisfaction. That I should be cautious and quick-sighted, and feel many scruples which my children do *not* feel, is perfectly natural; and equally so that *my* value for domestic tranquillity, for a home which shuts out noisy pleasures, should much exceed theirs. But at your time of life to feel all this is a most favourable circumstance for yourself and for everybody connected with you; and I am sensible of the importance of having an ally of such weight."

Sir Thomas meant to be giving Mr. Rushworth's opinion in better words than he could find himself. He was aware that he must not expect a genius in Mr. Rushworth; but as a well-judging, steady young man, with better notions than his elocution would do justice to, he intended to value him very highly. It was impossible for many of the others not to smile. Mr. Rushworth hardly knew what to do with so much meaning; but by looking, as he really felt, most exceedingly pleased with Sir Thomas's good opinion, and saying scarcely anything, he did his best towards preserving that good opinion a little longer.

A Dinner at the Rectory

[*Edmund Bertram and Fanny Price are asked to dine with Dr. and Mrs. Grant.*]

"But why should Mrs. Grant ask Fanny?" said Lady Bertram. "How came she to think of asking Fanny? Fanny never dines there, you know, in this sort of way. I cannot spare her, and I am sure she does not want to go. Fanny, you do not want to go, do you?"

"If you put such a question to her," cried Edmund, preventing his cousin's speaking, "Fanny will immediately say, No; but I am sure, my dear mother, she would like to go; and I can see no reason why she should not."

"I cannot imagine why Mrs. Grant should think of asking her? She never did before. She used to ask your sisters now and then, but she never asked Fanny."

"If you cannot do without me, ma'am——" said Fanny, in a self-denying tone.

"But my mother will have my father with her all the evening."

"To be sure, so I shall."

"Suppose you take my father's opinion, ma'am."

"That's well thought of. So I will, Edmund. I will ask Sir Thomas, as soon as he comes in, whether I can do without her."

"As you please, ma'am, on that head; but I meant my father's opinion as to the *propriety* of the invitation being accepted or not; and I think he will consider it a right thing by Mrs. Grant, as well as by Fanny, that being the *first* invitation it should be accepted."

"I do not know. We will ask him. But he will

be very much surprised that Mrs. Grant should ask Fanny at all."

There was nothing more to be said, or that could be said, to any purpose, till Sir Thomas were present ; but the subject involving, as it did, her own evening's comfort for the morrow, was so much uppermost in Lady Bertram's mind, that half an hour afterwards, on his looking in for a minute on his way from his plantation to his dressing-room, she called him back again, when he had almost closed the door, with " Sir Thomas, stop a moment—I have something to say to you."

Her tone of calm languor, for she never took the trouble of raising her voice, was always heard and attended to ; and Sir Thomas came back. Her story began ; and Fanny immediately slipped out of the room ; for to hear herself the subject of any discussion with her uncle was more than her nerves could bear. She was anxious, she knew—more anxious perhaps than she ought to be—for what was it after all whether she went or stayed ? but if her uncle were to be a great while considering and deciding, and with very grave looks, and those grave looks directed to her, and at last decide against her, she might not be able to appear properly submissive and indifferent. Her cause, meanwhile, went on well. It began, on Lady Bertram's part, with—" I have something to tell you that will surprise you. Mrs. Grant has asked Fanny to dinner."

" Well," said Sir Thomas, as if waiting more to accomplish the surprise.

" Edmund wants her to go. But how can I spare her ? "

" She will be late," said Sir Thomas, taking out his watch ; " but what is your difficulty ? "

Edmund found himself obliged to speak and fill up the blanks in his mother's story. He told the whole ; and she had only to add, " So strange ! for Mrs. Grant never used to ask her."

" But is it not very natural," observed Edmund, " that Mrs. Grant should wish to procure so agreeable a visitor for her sister ? "

" Nothing can be more natural," said Sir Thomas, after a short deliberation ; " nor, were there no sister in the case, could anything, in my opinion, be more natural. Mrs. Grant's showing civility to Miss Price, to Lady Bertram's niece, could never want explanation. The only surprise I can feel is, that this should be the *first* time of its being paid. Fanny was perfectly right in giving only a conditional answer. She appears to feel as she ought. But as I conclude that she must wish to go, since all young people like to be together, I can see no reason why she should be denied the indulgence."

" But can I do without her, Sir Thomas ? "

" Indeed, I think you may."

" She always makes tea, you know, when my sister is not here."

" Your sister, perhaps, may be prevailed on to spend the day with us, and I shall certainly be at home."

" Very well, then, Fanny may go, Edmund."

The good news soon followed her. Edmund knocked at her door in his way to his own.

" Well, Fanny, it is all happily settled, and without the smallest hesitation on your uncle's side. He had but one opinion. You are to go."

" Thank you, I am so glad," was Fanny's instinctive reply ; though when she had turned from him and shut the door, she could not help feeling, " And yet

why should I be glad ? for am I not certain of seeing or hearing something there to pain me ? ”

In spite of this conviction, however, she was glad. Simple as such an engagement might appear in other eyes, it had novelty and importance in hers, for, excepting the day at Sotherton, she had scarcely ever dined out before ; and though now going only half a mile, and only to three people, still it was dining out, and all the little interests of preparation were enjoyments in themselves. She had neither sympathy nor assistance from those who ought to have entered into her feelings and directed her taste ; for Lady Bertram never thought of being useful to anybody, and Mrs. Norris, when she came on the morrow, in consequence of an early call and invitation from Sir Thomas, was in a very ill humour, and seemed intent only on lessening her niece's pleasure, both present and future, as much as possible.

“ Upon my word, Fanny, you are in high luck to meet with such attention and indulgence ! You ought to be very much obliged to Mrs. Grant for thinking of you, and to your aunt for letting you go, and you ought to look upon it as something extraordinary : for I hope you are aware that there is no real occasion for your going into company in this sort of way, or ever dining out at all ; and it is what you must not depend upon ever being repeated. Nor must you be fancying that the invitation is meant as any particular compliment to *you* ; the compliment is intended to your uncle and aunt and me. Mrs. Grant thinks it a civility due to *us* to take a little notice of you, or else it would never have come into her head, and you may be very certain, that if your cousin Julia had been at home, you would not have been asked at all.”

Mrs. Norris had now so ingeniously done away all Mrs. Grant's part of the favour, that Fanny, who found herself expected to speak, could only say that she was very much obliged to her aunt Bertram for sparing her, and that she was endeavouring to put her aunt's evening work in such a state as to prevent her being missed.

"Oh! depend upon it, your aunt can do very well without you, or you would not be allowed to go. I shall be here, so you may be quite easy about your aunt. And I hope you will have a very *agreeable* day, and find it all mighty *delightful*. But I must observe that five is the very awkwardest of all possible numbers to sit down to table; and I cannot but be surprised that such an *elegant* lady as Mrs. Grant should not contrive better! And round their enormous great wide table, too, which fills up the room so dreadfully! Had the Doctor been contented to take my dining-table when I came away, as anybody in their senses would have done, instead of having that absurd new one of his own, which is wider, literally wider than the dinner-table here, how infinitely better it would have been! and how much more he would have been respected! for people are never respected when they step out of their proper sphere. Remember *that*, Fanny. Five—only five to be sitting round that table. However, you will have dinner enough on it for ten, I dare say."

Mrs. Norris fetched breath and went on again.

"The nonsense and folly of people's stepping out of their rank and trying to appear above themselves, makes me think it right to give *you* a hint, Fanny, now that you are going into company without any of us; and I do beseech and entreat you not to be putting yourself forward, and talking and giving your opinion

as if you were one of your cousins, as if you were dear Mrs. Rushworth or Julia. *That* will never do, believe me. Remember, wherever you are, you must be the lowest and last ; and though Miss Crawford is in a manner at home at the Parsonage, you are not to be taking place of her. And as to coming away at night, you are to stay just as long as Edmund chooses. Leave him to settle *that*."

" Yes, ma'am, I should not think of anything else."

" And if it should rain, which I think exceedingly likely, for I never saw it more threatening for a wet evening in my life, you must manage as well as you can, and not be expecting the carriage to be sent for you. I certainly do not go home to-night, and, therefore, the carriage will not be out on my account ; so you must make up your mind to what may happen, and take your things accordingly."

Her niece thought it perfectly reasonable. She rated her own claims to comfort as low even as Mrs. Norris could ; and when Sir Thomas, soon afterwards, just opening the door, said, " Fanny, at what time would you have the carriage come round ? " she felt a degree of astonishment which made it impossible for her to speak.

" My dear Sir Thomas ! " cried Mrs. Norris, red with anger, " Fanny can walk."

" Walk ! " repeated Sir Thomas, in a tone of most unanswerable dignity, and coming farther into the room. " My niece walk to a dinner engagement at this time of the year ! Will twenty minutes after four suit you ? "

" Yes, sir," was Fanny's humble answer, given with the feelings almost of a criminal towards Mrs. Norris ; and not bearing to remain with her in what might seem a state of triumph, she followed her uncle out of

the room, having stayed behind him only long enough to hear these words spoken in angry agitation :—

“ Quite unnecessary ! a great deal too kind ! But Edmund goes ; true, it is upon Edmund’s account. I observed he was hoarse on Thursday night.”

But this could not impose on Fanny. She felt that the carriage was for herself, and herself alone ; and her uncle’s consideration of her, coming immediately after such representations from her aunt, cost her some tears of gratitude when she was alone.

A Trifler with Love

[*Henry Crawford is so greatly attracted by the budding beauty of Fanny Price, that he determines to lay siege to her fancy.*]

Henry Crawford had quite made up his mind by the next morning to give another fortnight to Mansfield, and having sent for his hunters, and written a few lines of explanation to the Admiral, he looked round at his sister as he sealed and threw the letter from him, and seeing the coast clear of the rest of the family, said, with a smile, “ And how do you think I mean to amuse myself, Mary, on the days that I do not hunt ? I am grown too old to go out more than three times a week ; but I have a plan for the intermediate days, and what do you think it is ! ”

“ To walk and ride with me, to be sure.”

“ Not exactly, though I shall be happy to do both, but *that* would be exercise only to my body, and I must take care of my mind. Besides, that would be all recreation and indulgence, without the wholesome alloy of labour, and I do not like to eat the bread of

idleness. No, my plan is to make Fanny Price in love with me."

"Fanny Price! Nonsense! No, no. You ought to be satisfied with her two cousins."

"But I cannot be satisfied without Fanny Price—without making a small hole in Fanny Price's heart. You do not seem properly aware of her claims to notice. When we talked of her last night, you none of you seemed sensible of the wonderful improvement that has taken place in her looks within the last six weeks. You see her every day, and therefore do not notice it; but I assure you she is quite a different creature from what she was in the autumn. She was then merely a quiet, modest, not plain-looking girl, but she is now absolutely pretty. I used to think she had neither complexion nor countenance; but in that soft skin of hers, so frequently tinged with a blush as it was yesterday, there is decided beauty; and from what I observed of her eyes and mouth, I do not despair of their being capable of expression enough when she has anything to express. And then, her air, her manner, her *tout ensemble*, is so indescribably improved. She must be grown two inches, at least, since October."

"Phoo! phoo! This is only because there were no tall women to compare her with, and because she has got a new gown, and you never saw her so well dressed before. She is just what she was in October, believe me. The truth is, that she was the only girl in company for you to notice, and you must have a somebody. I have always thought her pretty—not strikingly pretty—but 'pretty enough' as people say; a sort of beauty that grows on one. Her eyes should be darker, but she has a sweet smile; but as for this wonderful degree of improvement, I am sure it may all be resolved into a better style of dress, and your

having nobody else to look at ; and therefore if you do set about a flirtation with her, you never will persuade me that it is in compliment to her beauty, or that it proceeds from anything but your own idleness and folly."

Her brother gave only a smile to this accusation, and soon afterwards said, " I do not quite know what to make of Miss Fanny. I do not understand her. I could not tell what she would be at yesterday. What is her character ? Is she solemn ? Is she queer ? Is she prudish ? Why did she draw back and look so grave at me ? I could hardly get her to speak. I never was so long in company with a girl in my life, trying to entertain her, and succeed so ill ! Never met with a girl who looked so grave on me ! I must get the better of this. Her looks say, ' I will not like you, I am determined not to like you ' ; and I say she shall."

" Foolish fellow ! And so this is her attraction after all ! This it is, her not caring about you, which gives her such a soft skin, and makes her so much taller, and produces all these charms and graces ! I do desire that you will not be making her really unhappy ; a *little* love, perhaps, may animate and do her good, but I will not have you plunge her deep, for she is as good a little creature as ever lived, and has a great deal of feeling."

" It can be but for a fortnight," said Henry ; " and if a fortnight will kill her, she must have a constitution which nothing could save. No, I will not do her any harm, dear little soul ! I only want her to look kindly on me, to give me smiles as well as blushes, to keep a chair for me by herself wherever we are, and be all animation when I take it and talk to her ; to think as I think, be interested in all my possessions and

pleasures, try to keep me longer at Mansfield, and feel when I go away that she shall never be happy again. I want nothing more."

"Moderation itself!" said Mary. "I can have no scruples now. Well, you will have opportunities enough of endeavouring to recommend yourself, for we are a great deal together."

Caught in His own Snare

[Crawford, really in love with Fanny, asks Sir Thomas for her hand. To the astonishment of both men, she refuses his offer, and her uncle, angry at first, determines not to force her inclinations.]

In spite of his intended silence, Sir Thomas found himself once more obliged to mention the subject to his niece, to prepare her briefly for its being imparted to her aunts; a measure which he would still have avoided, if possible, but which became necessary from the totally opposite feelings of Mr. Crawford, as to any secrecy of proceeding. He had no idea of concealment. It was all known at the Parsonage, where he loved to talk over the future with both his sisters, and it would be rather gratifying to him to have enlightened witnesses of the progress of his success. When Sir Thomas understood this, he felt the necessity of making his own wife and sister-in-law acquainted with the business without delay; though, on Fanny's account, he almost dreaded the effect of the communication to Mrs. Norris as much as Fanny herself. He deprecated her mistaken but well-meaning zeal. Sir Thomas, indeed, was, by this time, not very far from classing Mrs. Norris as one of those well-meaning

people who are always doing mistaken and very disagreeable things.

Mrs. Norris, however, relieved him. He pressed for the strictest forbearance and silence towards their niece; she not only promised, but did observe it. She only looked her increased ill-will. Angry she was—bitterly angry; but she was more angry with Fanny for having received such an offer than for refusing it. It was an injury and affront to Julia, who ought to have been Mr. Crawford's choice; and independently of that, she disliked Fanny, because she had neglected her; and she would have grudged such an elevation to one whom she had been always trying to depress.

Sir Thomas gave her more credit for discretion on the occasion than she deserved; and Fanny could have blessed her for allowing her only to see her displeasure, and not to hear it.

Lady Bertram took it differently. She had been a beauty, and a prosperous beauty, all her life; and beauty and wealth were all that excited her respect. To know Fanny to be sought in marriage by a man of fortune raised her, therefore, very much in her opinion. By convincing her that Fanny *was* very pretty, which she had been doubting about before, and that she would be advantageously married, it made her feel a sort of credit in calling her niece.

"Well, Fanny," said she, as soon as they were alone together afterwards—and she really had known something like impatience to be alone with her, and her countenance, as she spoke, had extraordinary animation,—“well, Fanny, I have had a very agreeable surprise this morning. I must just speak of it *once*—I told Sir Thomas I must *once*—and then I shall have done. I give you joy, my dear niece.” And

looking at her complacently, she added, "Humph, we certainly are a handsome family!"

Fanny coloured, and doubted at first what to say; when, hoping to assail her on her vulnerable side, she presently answered—

"My dear aunt, *you* cannot wish me to do differently from what I have done, I am sure. You cannot wish me to marry; for you would miss me, should not you? Yes, I am sure you would miss me too much for that."

"No, my dear, I should not think of missing you when such an offer as this comes in your way. I could do very well without you, if you were married to a man of such good estate as Mr. Crawford. And you must be aware, Fanny, that it is every young woman's duty to accept such a very unexceptionable offer as this."

This was almost the only rule of conduct, the only piece of advice, which Fanny had ever received from her aunt in the course of eight years and a half. It silenced her. She felt how unprofitable contention would be. If her aunt's feelings were against her, nothing could be hoped from attacking her understanding. Lady Bertram was quite talkative.

"I will tell you what, Fanny," said she, "I am sure he fell in love with you at the ball; I am sure the mischief was done that evening. You did look remarkably well. Everybody said so. Sir Thomas said so. And you know you had Chapman to help you to dress. I am very glad I sent Chapman to you. I shall tell Sir Thomas that I am sure it was done that evening." And still pursuing the same cheerful thoughts, she soon afterwards added, "And I will tell you what, Fanny—which is more than I did for Maria—the next time pug has a litter you shall have a puppy."

The Price Family at Home

[William, her sailor brother, having returned from abroad, Fanny goes with him on a visit to their parents at Portsmouth.]

The novelty of travelling, and the happiness of being with William soon produced their natural effect on Fanny's spirits, when Mansfield Park was fairly left behind; and by the time their first stage was ended, and they were to quit Sir Thomas's carriage, she was able to take leave of the old coachman, and send back proper messages, with cheerful looks.

Of pleasant talk between the brother and sister there was no end. Everything supplied an amusement to the high glee of William's mind, and he was full of frolic and joke in the intervals of their higher-toned subjects, all of which ended, if they did not begin, in praise of the *Thrush*, conjectures how she would be employed, schemes for an action with some superior force, which (supposing the first lieutenant out of the way, and William was not very merciful to the first lieutenant) was to give himself the next step as soon as possible, or speculations upon prize-money, which was to be generously distributed at home, with only the reservation of enough to make the little cottage comfortable, in which he and Fanny were to pass all their middle and latter life together.

Fanny's immediate concerns, as far as they involved Mr. Crawford, made no part of their conversation. William knew what had passed, and from his heart lamented that his sister's feelings should be so cold towards a man whom he must consider as the first of human characters; but he was of age to be all for

love, and therefore unable to blame ; and knowing her wish on the subject, he would not distress her by the slightest allusion.

She had reason to suppose herself not yet forgotten by Mr. Crawford. She had heard repeatedly from his sister within the three weeks which had passed since their leaving Mansfield, and in each letter there had been a few lines from himself, warm and determined like his speeches. It was a correspondence which Fanny found quite as unpleasant as she had feared. Miss Crawford's style of writing, lively and affectionate, was itself an evil, independent of what she was forced into reading from the brother's pen, for Edmund would never rest till she had read the chief of the letter to him ; and then she had to listen to his admiration of her language, and the warmth of her attachments. There had, in fact, been so much of message, of allusion, of recollection, so much of Mansfield in every letter, that Fanny could not but suppose it meant for him to hear ; and to find herself forced into a purpose of that kind, compelled into a correspondence which was bringing her the addresses of the man she did not love, and obliging her to administer to the adverse passion of the man she did, was cruelly mortifying. Here, too, her present removal promised advantage. When no longer under the same roof with Edmund, she trusted that Miss Crawford would have no motive for writing strong enough to overcome the trouble, and that at Portsmouth their correspondence would dwindle into nothing.

With such thoughts as these, among ten thousand others, Fanny proceeded on her journey safely and cheerfully, and as expeditiously as could rationally be hoped in the dirty month of February. They entered

Oxford, but she could take only a hasty glimpse of Edmund's college as they passed along, and made no stop anywhere, till they reached Newbury, where a comfortable meal, uniting dinner and supper, wound up the enjoyments and fatigues of the day.

The next morning saw them off again at an early hour; and with no events, and no delays, they regularly advanced, and were in the environs of Portsmouth while there was yet daylight for Fanny to look around her, and wonder at the new buildings. They passed the drawbridge, and entered the town; and the light was only beginning to fail, as, guided by William's powerful voice, they were rattled into a narrow street, leading from the High Street, and drawn up before the door of a small house now inhabited by Mr. Price.

Fanny was all agitation and flutter; all hope and apprehension. The moment they stopped, a trollopy-looking maid-servant, seemingly in waiting for them at the door, stepped forward, and, more intent on telling the news than giving them any help, immediately began with, "The *Thrush* is gone out of harbour, please, sir, and one of the officers has been here to——" She was interrupted by a fine tall boy of eleven years old, who, rushing out of the house, pushed the maid aside, and while William was opening the chaise-door himself, called out, "You are just in time. We have been looking for you this half-hour. The *Thrush* went out of harbour this morning. I saw her. It was a beautiful sight. And they think she will have her orders in a day or two. And Mr. Campbell was here at four o'clock to ask for you; he has got one of the *Thrush's* boats, and is going off to her at six, and hoped you would be here in time to go with him."

A stare or two at Fanny, as William helped her out of the carriage, was all the voluntary notice which this brother bestowed ; but he made no objection to her kissing him, though still entirely engaged in detailing further particulars of the *Thrush's* going out of harbour, in which he had a strong right of interest, being to commence his career of seamanship in her at this very time.

Another moment and Fanny was in the narrow entrance-passage of the house, and in her mother's arms, who met her there with looks of true kindness, and with features which Fanny loved the more because they brought her Aunt Bertram's before her ; and there her two sisters, Susan, a well-grown fine girl of fourteen, and Betsey, the youngest of the family, about five—both glad to see her in their way, though with no advantage of manner in receiving her. But manner Fanny did not want. Would they but love her, she should be satisfied.

She was then taken into a parlour, so small that her first conviction was of its being only a passage-room to something better, and she stood for a moment expecting to be invited on ; but when she saw there was no other door, and that there were signs of habitation before her, she called back her thoughts, reproved herself, and grieved lest they should have been suspected. Her mother, however, could not stay long enough to suspect anything. She was gone again to the street-door, to welcome William. " Oh ! my dear William, how glad I am to see you. But have you heard about the *Thrush* ? She is gone out of harbour already ; three days before we had any thought of it ; and I do not know what I am to do about Sam's things, they will never be ready in time ; for she may have her orders to-morrow,

perhaps. It takes me quite unawares. And now you must be off for Spithead too. Campbell has been here, quite in a worry about you ; and now what shall we do ? I thought to have had such a comfortable evening with you, and here everything comes upon me at once."

Her son answered cheerfully, telling her that everything was always for the best ; and making light of his own inconvenience, in being obliged to hurry away so soon.

"To be sure, I had much rather she had stayed in harbour, that I might have sat a few hours with you in comfort ; but as there is a boat ashore, I had better go off at once, and there is no help for it. Whereabouts does the *Thrush* lie at Spithead ? Near the *Canopus* ? But no matter ; here's Fanny in the parlour, and why should we stay in the passage ? Come, mother, you have hardly looked at your own dear Fanny yet."

In they both came, and Mrs. Price having kindly kissed her daughter again, and commented a little on her growth, began with very natural solicitude to feel for their fatigues and wants as travellers.

"Poor dears ! how tired you must both be ! and now, what will you have ? I began to think you would never come. Betsey and I have been watching for you this half hour. And when did you get anything to eat ? And what would you like to have now ? I could not tell whether you would be for some meat, or only a dish of tea after your journey, or else I would have got something ready. And now I am afraid Campbell will be here before there is time to dress a steak, and we have no butcher at hand. It is very inconvenient to have no butcher in the street. We were better off in our last house.

Perhaps you would like some tea as soon as it can be got."

They both declared they should prefer it to anything. "Then, Betsey, my dear, run into the kitchen, and see if Rebecca has put the water on; and tell her to bring in the tea-things as soon as she can. I wish we could get the bell mended; but Betsey is a very handy little messenger."

Betsey went with alacrity, proud to show her abilities before her fine new sister.

"Dear me!" continued the anxious mother, "what a sad fire we have got, and I dare say you are both starved with cold. Draw your chair nearer, my dear. I cannot think what Rebecca has been about. I am sure I told her to bring some coals half an hour ago. Susan, *you* should have taken care of the fire."

"I was upstairs, mamma, moving my things," said Susan, in a fearless, self-defending tone, which startled Fanny. "You know you had but just settled that my sister Fanny and I should have the other room; and I could not get Rebecca to give me any help."

Farther discussion was prevented by various bustles; first, the driver came to be paid; then there was a squabble between Sam and Rebecca about the manner of carrying up his sister's trunk, which he would manage all his own way; and lastly, in walked Mr. Price himself, his own loud voice preceding him, as with something of the oath kind he kicked away his son's portmanteau and his daughter's band-box in the passage, and called out for a candle; no candle was brought, however, and he walked into the room.

Fanny with doubting feelings had risen to meet him, but sank down again on finding herself undistinguished in the dusk, and unthought of. With a friendly

shake of his son's hand, and an eager voice, he instantly began—"Ha! welcome back, my boy. Glad to see you. Have you heard the news? The *Thrush* went out of harbour this morning. Sharp is the word, you see! By G—, you are just in time! The doctor has been here inquiring for you; he has got one of the boats, and is to be off for Spithead by six, so you had better go with him. I have been to Turner's about your mess; it is all in a way to be done. I should not wonder if you had your orders to-morrow; but you cannot sail with this wind, if you are to cruise to the westward; and Captain Walsh thinks you will certainly have a cruise to the westward, with the *Elephant*. By G—, I wish you may! But old Scholey was saying, just now, that he thought you would be sent first to the *Texel*. Well, well, we are ready, whatever happens. But, by G—, you lost a fine sight, by not being here in the morning to see the *Thrush* go out of harbour! I would not have been out of the way for a thousand pounds. Old Scholey ran in at breakfast-time to say she had slipped her moorings and was coming out. I jumped up, and made but two steps to the platform. If ever there was a perfect beauty afloat she is one; and there she lies at Spithead, and anybody in England would take her for an eight-and-twenty. I was upon the platform two hours this afternoon looking at her. She lies close to the *Endymion*, between her and the *Cleopatra*, just to the eastward of the sheer hulk."

"Ha!" cried William, "*that's* just where I should have put her myself. It's the best berth at Spithead. But here is my sister, sir; here is Fanny," turning and leading her forward; "it is so dark you do not see her."

With an acknowledgment that he had quite for-

gotten her, Mr. Price now received his daughter ; and having given her a cordial hug, and observed that she was grown into a woman, and he supposed would be wanting a husband soon, seemed very much inclined to forget her again.

Fanny shrunk back to her seat, with feelings sadly pained by his language and his smell of spirits ; and he talked on only to his son, and only of the *Thrush*, though William, warmly interested as he was in that subject, more than once tried to make his father think of Fanny, and her long absence and long journey.

After sitting some time longer a candle was obtained ; but as there was still no appearance of tea, nor, from Betsey's reports from the kitchen, much hope of any under a considerable period, William determined to go and change his dress, and make the necessary preparations for his removal on board directly, that he might have his tea in comfort afterwards.

As he left the room, two rosy-faced boys, ragged and dirty, about eight and nine years old, rushed into it just released from school, and coming eagerly to see their sister, and tell that the *Thrush* was gone out of harbour—Tom and Charles. Charles had been born since Fanny's going away, but Tom she had often helped to nurse, and now felt a particular pleasure in seeing again. Both were kissed very tenderly, but Tom she wanted to keep by her, to try to trace the features of the baby she had loved, and talked to, of his infant preference of herself. Tom, however, had no mind for such treatment ; he came home not to stand and be talked to, but to run about and make a noise ; and both boys had soon burst from her, and slammed the parlour door till her temples ached.

She had now seen all that were at home ; there remained only two brothers between herself and Susan,

one of whom was a clerk in a public office in London, and the other midshipman on board an Indiaman. But though she had *seen* all the members of the family, she had not yet *heard* all the noise they could make. Another quarter of an hour brought her a great deal more. William was soon calling out, from the landing-place of the second story, for his mother and for Rebecca. He was in distress for something that he had left there, and did not find again. A key was mislaid, Betsey accused of having got at his new hat, and some slight but essential alteration of his uniform waistcoat, which he had been promised to have done for him, entirely neglected.

Mrs. Price, Rebecca, and Betsey all went up to defend themselves, all talking together, but Rebecca loudest, and the job was to be done, as well as it could, in a great hurry ; William trying in vain to send Betsey down again, or keep her from being troublesome where she was ; the whole of which, as almost every door in the house was open, could be plainly distinguished in the parlour, except when drowned at intervals by the superior noise of Sam, Tom, and Charles, chasing each other up and down stairs, and tumbling about and hallooing.

Fanny was almost stunned. The smallness of the house and thinness of the walls brought everything so close to her that, added to the fatigue of her journey, and all her recent agitation, she hardly knew how to bear it. *Within* the room all was tranquil enough, for Susan having disappeared with the others, there were soon only her father and herself remaining ; and he taking out a newspaper, the customary loan of a neighbour, applied himself to studying it, without seeming to recollect her existence. The solitary candle was held between himself and the paper, with-

out any reference to her possible convenience ; but she had nothing to do, and was glad to have the light screened from her aching head, as she sat in bewildered, broken, sorrowful contemplation.

She was at home. But, alas ! it was not such a home, she had not such a welcome, as—she checked herself ; she was unreasonable. What right had she to be of importance to her family ? She could have none, so long lost sight of ! William's concerns must be dearest ; they always had been, and he had every right. Yet to have so little said or asked about herself, to have scarcely an inquiry made after Mansfield ! It did pain her to have Mansfield forgotten ; the friends who had done so much ; the dear, dear friends ! But here one subject swallowed up all the rest. Perhaps it must be so. The destination of the *Thrush* must be now pre-eminently interesting. A day or two might show the difference. *She* only was to blame. Yet she thought it would not have been so at Mansfield. No, in her uncle's house there would have been a consideration of times and seasons, a regulation of subject, a propriety, an attention towards everybody which there was not here.

The only interruption which thoughts like these received for nearly half an hour was from a sudden burst of her father's, not at all calculated to compose them. At a more than ordinary pitch of thumping and hallooing in the passage he exclaimed, " Devil take those young dogs ! How they are singing out ! Ay, Sam's voice louder than all the rest ! That boy is fit for a boatswain. Holloa, you there ! Sam, stop your confounded pipe, or I shall be after you."

This threat was so palpably disregarded, that though within five minutes afterwards the three boys all burst into the room together and sat down, Fanny

could not consider it as a proof of anything more than their being for the time thoroughly fagged, which their hot faces and panting breaths seemed to prove, especially as they were still kicking each other's shins, and hallooing out at sudden starts immediately under their father's eye.

The next opening of the door brought something more welcome ; it was for the tea-things, which she had begun almost to despair of seeing that evening. Susan and an attendant girl, whose inferior appearance informed Fanny, to her great surprise, that she had previously seen the upper servant, brought in everything necessary for the meal ; Susan looking, as she put the kettle on the fire and glanced at her sister, as if divided between the agreeable triumph of showing her activity and usefulness, and the dread of being thought to demean herself by such an office. " She had been into the kitchen," she said, " to hurry Sally and help to make the toast, and spread the bread-and-butter, or she did not know when they should have got tea, and she was sure her sister must want something after her journey."

Fanny was very thankful. She could not but own that she should be very glad of a little tea, and Susan immediately set about making it, as if pleased to have the employment all to herself ; and with only a little unnecessary bustle, and some few injudicious attempts at keeping her brothers in better order than she could, acquitted herself very well. Fanny's spirit was as much refreshed as her body ; her head and heart were soon the better for such well-timed kindness. Susan had an open, sensible countenance ; she was like William, and Fanny hoped to find her like him in disposition and good-will towards herself.

In this more placid state of things William re-

entered, followed not far behind by his mother and Betsey. He, complete in his lieutenant's uniform, looking and moving all the taller, firmer, and more graceful for it, and with the happiest smile over his face, walked up directly to Fanny, who, rising from her seat, looked at him for a moment in speechless admiration, and then threw her arms round his neck to sob out her various emotions of pain and pleasure.

Anxious not to appear unhappy, she soon recovered herself; and, wiping away her tears, was able to notice and admire all the striking parts of his dress; listening with reviving spirits to his cheerful hopes of being on shore some part of every day before they sailed, and even of getting her to Spithead to see the sloop.

The next bustle brought in Mr. Campbell, the surgeon of the *Thrush*, a very well-behaved young man, who came to call for his friend, and for whom there was with some contrivance found a chair, and with some hasty washing of the young tea-makers, a cup and saucer; and after another quarter of an hour of earnest talk between the gentlemen, noise rising upon noise, and bustle upon bustle, men and boys at last all in motion together, the moment came for setting off; everything was ready, William took leave, and all of them were gone; for the three boys, in spite of their mother's entreaty, determined to see their brother and Mr. Campbell to the sally-port; and Mr. Price walked off at the same time to carry back his neighbour's newspaper.

Something like tranquillity might now be hoped for; and accordingly, when Rebecca had been prevailed on to carry away the tea-things, and Mrs. Price had walked about the room some time looking for a shirt-sleeve, which Betsey at last hunted out from a

drawer in the kitchen, the small party of females were pretty well composed, and the mother having lamented again over the impossibility of getting Sam ready in time, was at leisure to think of her eldest daughter and the friends she had come from.

A few inquiries began : but one of the earliest—How did her sister Bertram manage about her servants? Was she as much plagued as herself to get tolerable servants?—soon led her mind away from Northamptonshire, and fixed it on her own domestic grievances, and the shocking character of all the Portsmouth servants, of whom she believed her own two were the very worst, engrossed her completely. The Bertrams were all forgotten in detailing the faults of Rebecca, against whom Susan had also much to depose, and little Betsey a great deal more, and who did seem so thoroughly without a single recommendation, that Fanny could not help modestly presuming that her mother meant to part with her when her year was up.

“ Her year ! ” cried Mrs. Price ; “ I am sure I hope I shall be rid of her before she has stayed a year, for that will not be up till November. Servants are come to such a pass, my dear, in Portsmouth, that it is quite a miracle if one keeps them more than half a year. I have no hope of ever being settled ; and if I was to part with Rebecca, I should only get something worse. And yet I do not think I am a very difficult mistress to please ; and I am sure the place is easy enough, for there is always a girl under her, and I often do half the work myself.”

Fanny was silent ; but not from being convinced that there might not be a remedy found for some of these evils. As she now sat looking at Betsey she could not but think particularly of another sister, a very pretty little girl, whom she had left there not

much younger when she went into Northamptonshire, who had died a few years afterwards. There had been something remarkably amiable about her. Fanny in those early days had preferred her to Susan ; and when the news of her death had at last reached Mansfield, had for a short time been quite afflicted. The sight of Betsey brought the image of little Mary back again, but she would not have pained her mother by alluding to her for the world. While considering her with these ideas, Betsey, at a small distance, was holding out something to catch her eyes meaning to screen it at the same time from Susan's.

"What have you got there, my love ?" said Fanny ; "come and show it to me."

It was a silver knife. Up jumped Susan claiming it as her own, and trying to get it away ; but the child ran to her mother's protection, and Susan could only reproach, which she did very warmly, and evidently hoping to interest Fanny on her side. "It was very hard that she was not to have her *own* knife ; it was her own knife ; little sister Mary had left it to her upon her death-bed, and she ought to have had it to keep herself long ago. But mamma kept it from her, and was always letting Betsey get hold of it ; and the end of it would be that Betsey would spoil it, and get it for her own, though mamma had promised her that Betsey should not have it in her own hands."

Fanny was quite shocked. Every feeling of duty, honour, and tenderness was wounded by her sister's speech and her mother's reply.

"Now, Susan," cried Mrs. Price, in a complaining voice, "now, how can you be so cross ? You are always quarrelling about that knife. I wish you would not be so quarrelsome. Poor little Betsey ; how cross Susan is to you ! But you should not have taken it

out, my dear, when I sent you to the drawer. You know I told you not to touch it, because Susan is so cross about it. I must hide it another time, Betsey. Poor Mary little thought it would be such a bone of contention when she gave it to me to keep, only two hours before she died. Poor little soul! she could but just speak to be heard, and she said so prettily, 'Let sister Susan have my knife, mamma, when I am dead and buried.' Poor little dear! she was so fond of it, Fanny, that she would have it lie by her in bed, all through her illness. It was the gift of her good godmother, old Mrs. Admiral Maxwell, only six weeks before she was taken for death. Poor little sweet creature! Well, she was taken away from evil to come. My own Betsey (fondling her) *you* have not the luck of such a good godmother. Aunt Norris lives too far off to think of such little people as you."

Fanny had indeed nothing to convey from aunt Norris but a message to say she hoped her god-daughter was a good girl, and learned her book. There had been at one moment a slight murmur in the drawing-room at Mansfield Park about sending her a prayer-book; but no second sound had been heard of such a purpose. Mrs. Norris, however, had gone home and taken down two old prayer-books of her husband with that idea; but, upon examination the ardour of generosity went off. One was found to have too small a print for a child's eyes, and the other to be too cumbersome for her to carry about.

Fanny, fatigued and fatigued again, was thankful to accept the first invitation of going to bed; and before Betsey had finished her cry at being allowed to sit up only one hour extraordinary in honour of her sister, she was off, leaving all below in confusion and noise again: the boys begging for toasted cheese, her

father calling out for rum-and-water, and Rebecca never where she ought to be,

There was nothing to raise her spirits in the confined and scantily-furnished chamber that she was to share with Susan. The smallness of the rooms above and below, indeed, and the narrowness of the passage and staircase, struck her beyond her imagination. She soon learned to think with respect of her own little attic at Mansfield Park—in *that* house reckoned too small for anybody's comfort.

Persuasion

Pride of Birth and Property

[Anne, the heroine of this novel, is the second daughter of an idle and somewhat impoverished baronet, who in the course of the story is compelled to replenish his purse by letting his ancestral home.]

SIR WALTER ELLIOT, of Kellynch Hall in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage ; there he found occupation for an idle hour and consolation in a distressed one ; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents ; there any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs, changed naturally into pity and contempt. As he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century, and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed : this was the page at which the favourite volume always opened :

“ ELLIOT OF KELLYNCH HALL.

“ Walter Elliot, born March 1, 1760, married July 15, 1784, Elizabeth, daughter of James Stevenson, Esq., of South Park, in the county of Gloucester ; by which lady (who died 1800) he has issue, Elizabeth, born June 1, 1785 ; Anne, born August 9, 1787 ; a still-born son, November 5, 1789 ; Mary, born November 20, 1791.”

Precisely such had the paragraph originally stood from the printer's hands ; but Sir Walter had improved it by adding, for the information of himself and his family, these words, after the date of Mary's birth :—" Married, December 16, 1810, Charles, son and heir of Charles Musgrove, Esq., of Uppercross, in the county of Somerset," and by asserting most accurately the day of the month on which he had lost his wife.

Then followed the history and rise of the ancient and respectable family in the usual terms : how it had been first settled in Cheshire, how mentioned in Dugdale, serving the office of high sheriff, representing a borough in three successive parliaments, exertions of loyalty and dignity of baronet, in the first year of Charles II., with all the Marys and Elizabeths they had married ; forming altogether two handsome duodecimo pages, and concluding with the arms and motto :—" Principal seat, Kellynch Hall, in the county of Somerset," and Sir Walter's handwriting again in this finale :—

" Heir presumptive, William Walter Elliot, Esq., great-grandson of the second Sir Walter."

Vanity was the beginning and end of Sir Walter Elliot's character : vanity of person and of situation. He had been remarkably handsome in his youth, and at fifty-four was still a very fine man. Few women could think more of their personal appearance than he did, nor could the valet of any new-made lord be more delighted with the place he held in society. He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy ; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion.

His good looks and his rank had one fair claim on his attachment, since to them he must have owed a

wife of very superior character to anything deserved by his own. Lady Elliot had been an excellent woman, sensible and amiable, whose judgment and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never required indulgence afterwards. She had humoured, or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called on to quit them. Three girls, the two eldest sixteen and fourteen, was an awful legacy for a mother to bequeath, an awful charge rather to confide to the authority and guidance of a conceited, silly father. She had, however, one very intimate friend, a sensible, deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in the village of Kellynch; and on her kindness and advice Lady Elliot mainly relied for the best help and maintenance of the good principles and instruction which she had been anxiously giving her daughters.

This friend and Sir Walter did *not* marry, whatever might have been anticipated on that head by their acquaintance. Thirteen years had passed away since Lady Elliot's death, and they were still near neighbours and intimate friends, and one remained a widower, and the other a widow.

That Lady Russell, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, needs no apology to the public, which is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman *does* marry again, than when she does *not*; but Sir Walter's continuing in singleness requires

explanation. Be it known, then, that Sir Walter, like a good father (having met with one or two private disappointments in very unreasonable applications), prided himself on remaining single for his dear daughter's sake. For one daughter, his eldest, he would really have given up anything, which he had not been very much tempted to do. Elizabeth had succeeded at sixteen to all that was possible of her mother's rights and consequence ; and being handsome, and very like himself, her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily. His two other children were of very inferior value. Mary had acquired a little artificial importance by becoming Mrs. Charles Musgrove ; but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister ; her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way—she was only Anne.

To Lady Russell, indeed, she was a most dear and highly valued god-daughter, favourite, and friend. Lady Russell loved them all, but it was only in Anne that she could fancy the mother to revive again.

A few years before Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early ; and as, even in its height, her father had found little to admire in her, so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own, there could be nothing in them, now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem. He had never indulged much hope, he had now none, of ever reading her name in any other page of his favourite work. All equality of alliance must rest with Elizabeth, for Mary had merely connected herself with an old country family of respectability and large fortune, and had, therefore,

given all the honour and received none : Elizabeth would, one day or other, marry suitably.

It sometimes happens that a woman is handsomer at twenty-nine than she was ten years before ; and, generally speaking, if there has been neither ill health nor anxiety, it is a time of life at which scarcely any charm is lost. It was so with Elizabeth, still the same handsome Miss Elliot that she had begun to be thirteen years ago, and Sir Walter might be excused, therefore, in forgetting her age, or, at least, be deemed only half a fool, for thinking himself and Elizabeth as blooming as ever, amidst the wreck of good looks of everybody else ; for he could plainly see how old all the rest of his family and acquaintance were growing. Anne haggard, Mary coarse, every face in the neighbourhood worsting, and the rapid increase of the crow's foot about Lady Russell's temples had long been a distress to him.

Elizabeth did not equal her father in personal contentment. Thirteen years had seen her mistress of Kellynch Hall, presiding and directing with a self-possession and decision which could never have given the idea of her being younger than she was. For thirteen years had she been doing the honours, and laying down the domestic law at home, and leading the way to the chaise-and-four, and walking immediately after Lady Russell out of all the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms in the country. Thirteen winters' revolving frosts had seen her opening every ball of credit which a scanty neighbourhood afforded, and thirteen springs shown their blossoms, as she travelled up to London with her father, for a few weeks' annual enjoyment of the great world. She had the remembrance of all this, she had the consciousness of being nine-and-twenty to give her some regrets and

some apprehensions ; she was fully satisfied of being still quite as handsome as ever, but she felt her approach to the years of danger, and would have rejoiced to be certain of being properly solicited by baronet-blood within the next twelvemonth or two. Then might she again take up the book of books with as much enjoyment as in her early youth, but now she liked it not. Always to be presented with the date of her own birth and see no marriage follow but that of a youngest sister, made the book an evil ; and more than once, when her father has left it open on the table near her, had she closed it, with averted eyes, and pushed it away.

She had had a disappointment, moreover, which that book, and especially the history of her own family, must ever present the remembrance of. The heir-presumptive, the very William Walter Elliot, Esq., whose rights had been so generously supported by her father, had disappointed her.

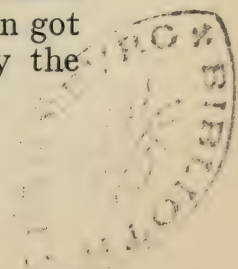
She had, while a very young girl, as soon as she had known him to be, in the event of her having no brother, the future baronet, meant to marry him, and her father had always meant that she should. He had not been known to them as a boy ; but soon after Lady Elliot's death Sir Walter had sought the acquaintance, and though his overtures had not been met with any warmth, he had persevered in seeking it, making allowance for the modest drawing-back of youth ; and, in one of their spring excursions to London, when Elizabeth was in her first bloom, Mr. Elliot had been forced into the introduction.

He was at that time a very young man, just engaged in the study of the law ; and Elizabeth found him extremely agreeable, and every plan in his favour was confirmed. He was invited to Kellynch Hall ; he

was talked of and expected all the rest of the year ; but he never came. The following spring he was seen again in town, found equally agreeable, again encouraged, invited, and expected, and again he did not come ; and the next tidings were that he was married. Instead of pushing his fortune in the line marked out for the heir of the house of Elliot, he had purchased independence by uniting himself to a rich woman of inferior birth.

Sir Walter had resented it. As the head of the house, he felt that he ought to have been consulted, especially after taking the young man so publicly by the hand ; “ For they must have been seen together,” he observed, “ once at Tattersall’s, and twice in the lobby of the House of Commons.” His disapprobation was expressed, but apparently very little regarded. Mr. Elliot had attempted no apology, and shown himself as unsolicitous of being longer noticed by the family, as Sir Walter considered him unworthy of it : all acquaintance between them had ceased.

This very awkward history of Mr. Elliot was still, after an interval of several years, felt with anger by Elizabeth, who had liked the man for himself, and still more for being her father’s heir, and whose strong family pride could see only in *him* a proper match for Sir Walter Elliot’s eldest daughter. There was not a baronet from A to Z whom her feelings could have so willingly acknowledged as an equal. Yet so miserably had he conducted himself, that though she was at this present time (the summer of 1814), wearing black ribands for his wife, she could not admit him to be worth thinking of again. The disgrace of his first marriage might, perhaps, as there was no reason to suppose it perpetuated by offspring, have been got over, had he not done worse ; but he had, as by the



accustomary intervention of kind friends, they had been informed spoken most disrespectfully of them all, most slightly and contemptuously of the very blood he belonged to, and the honours which were hereafter to be his own. This could not be pardoned.

Such were Elizabeth Elliot's sentiments and sensations ; such the cares to alloy, the agitations to vary, the sameness and the elegance, the prosperity and the nothingness of her scene of life ; such the feelings to give interest to a long, uneventful residence in one country circle, to fill the vacancies which there were no habits of utility abroad, no talents nor accomplishments for home, to occupy.

But now another occupation and solicitude of mind was beginning to be added to these. Her father was growing distressed for money. She knew, that when he now took up the Baronetage, it was to drive the heavy bills of his tradespeople, and the unwelcome hints of Mr. Shepherd, his agent, from his thoughts. The Kellynch property was good, but not equal to Sir Walter's apprehension of the state required in its possessor. While Lady Elliot lived, there had been method, moderation, and economy, which had just kept him within his income ; but with her had died all such right-mindedness, and from that period he had been constantly exceeding it. It had not been possible for him to spend less : he had done nothing but what Sir Walter Elliot was imperiously called on to do ; but blameless as he was, he was not only growing dreadfully in debt, but was hearing of it so often, that it became vain to attempt concealing it longer, even partially, from his daughter. He had given her some hints of it the last spring in town ; he had gone so far even as to say, " Can we retrench ? Does it occur to you that there is any one article in which we can

retrench ? ” and Elizabeth, to do her justice, had, in the first ardour of female alarm, set seriously to think what could be done, and had finally proposed these two branches of economy—to cut off some unnecessary charities, and to refrain from new furnishing the drawing-room ; to which expedients she afterwards added the happy thought of their taking no present down to Anne, as had been the usual yearly custom. But these measures, however good in themselves, were insufficient for the real extent of the evil, the whole of which Sir Walter found himself obliged to confess to her soon afterwards. Elizabeth had nothing to propose of deeper efficacy. She felt herself ill-used and unfortunate, as did her father ; and they were neither of them able to devise any means of lessening their expenses without compromising their dignity, or relinquishing their comforts in a way not to be borne.

There was only a small part of his estate that Sir Walter could dispose of ; but had every acre been alienable, it would have made no difference. He had condescended to mortgage as far as he had the power, but he would never condescend to sell. No ; he would never disgrace his name so far. The Kellynch estate should be transmitted whole and entire, as he had received it.

Their two confidential friends, Mr. Shepherd, who lived in the neighbouring market town, and Lady Russell, were called on to advise them ; and both father and daughter seemed to expect that something should be struck out by one or the other to remove their embarrassments and reduce their expenditure, without involving the loss of any indulgence of taste or pride.

A Hypochondriac Wife

[Anne goes to see her married sister, who has nothing much the matter with her, but is frequently laid up and always complaining of the selfishness of everybody but herself.]

Uppercross was a moderate-sized village, which a few years back had been completely in the old English style, containing only two houses superior in appearance to those of the yeomen and labourers ; the mansion of the squire with its high walls, great gates, and old trees, substantial and unmodernised, and the compact, tight parsonage, enclosed in its own neat garden, with a vine and a pear-tree trained round its casements ; but upon the marriage of the young squire, it had received the improvement of a farmhouse, elevated into a cottage, for his residence, and Uppercross Cottage, with its veranda, French windows, and other prettinesses, was quite as likely to catch the traveller's eye as the more consistent and considerable aspect and premises of the Great House, about a quarter of a mile farther on.

Here Anne had often been staying. She knew the ways of Uppercross as well as those of Kellynch. The two families were so continually meeting, so much in the habit of running in and out of each other's house at all hours, that it was rather a surprise to her to find Mary alone ; but being alone, her being unwell and out of spirits was almost a matter of course. Though better endowed than the elder sister, Mary had not Anne's understanding nor temper. While well, and happy, and properly attended to, she had great good humour and excellent spirits ; but any indisposition

sunk her completely. She had no resources for solitude ; and, inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used. In person, she was inferior to both sisters, and had, even in her bloom, only reached the dignity of being " a fine girl." She was now lying on the faded sofa of the pretty little drawing-room, the once elegant furniture of which had been gradually growing shabby under the influence of four summers and two children ; and, on Anne's appearing, greeted her with—

" So you are come at last ! I began to think I should never see you. I am so ill I can hardly speak. I have not seen a creature the whole morning ! "

" I am sorry to find you unwell," replied Anne. " You sent me such a good account of yourself on Thursday."

" Yes, I made the best of it ; I always do : but I was very far from well at the time ; and I do not think I ever was so ill in my life as I have been all this morning: very unfit to be left alone, I am sure. Suppose I were to be seized of a sudden in some dreadful way, and not able to ring the bell ! So Lady Russell would not get out. I do not think she has been in this house three times this summer."

Anne said what was proper, and inquired after her husband. " Oh ! Charles is out shooting. I have not seen him since seven o'clock. He would go, though I told him how ill I was. He said he should not stay out long ; but he has never come back, and now it is almost one. I assure you I have not seen a soul this whole long morning."

" You have had your little boys with you ? "

" Yes, as long as I could bear their noise ; but they are so unmanageable that they do me more harm

than good. Little Charles does not mind a word I say, and Walter is growing quite as bad."

"Well, you will soon be better now," replied Anne, cheerfully. "You know I always cure you when I come. How are your neighbours at the Great House?"

"I can give you no account of them. I have not seen one of them to-day, except Mr. Musgrove, who just stopped and spoke through the window, but without getting off his horse; and though I told him how ill I was, not one of them have been near me. It did not happen to suit the Miss Musgroves, I suppose, and they never put themselves out of their way."

"You will see them yet, perhaps, before the morning is gone. It is early."

"I never want them, I assure you. They talk and laugh a great deal too much for me. Oh! Anne, I am so very unwell! It was quite unkind for you not to come on Thursday."

"My dear Mary, recollect what a comfortable account you sent me of yourself! You wrote in the cheerfullest manner, and said you were perfectly well, and in no hurry for me; and that being the case, you must be aware that my wish would be to remain with Lady Russell to the last; and besides what I felt on her account, I have really been so busy, have had so much to do, that I could not very conveniently have left Kellynch sooner."

"Dear me! what can *you* possibly have had to do?"

"A great many things, I assure you. More than I can recollect in a moment; but I can tell you some. I have been making a duplicate of the catalogue of my father's books and pictures. I have been several times in the garden with Mackenzie, trying to understand, and make him understand, which of Elizabeth's plants are for Lady Russell. I have had all my own

little concerns to arrange, books and music to divide, and all my trunks to repack, from not having understood in time what was intended as to the waggons : and one thing I have had to do, Mary, of a more trying nature—going to almost every house in the parish, as a sort of take-leave. I was told that they wished it ; but all these things took up a great deal of time.”

“ Oh, well ! ” and after a moment’s pause, “ but you have never asked me one word about our dinner at the Pooles’ yesterday.”

“ Did you go, then ? I have made no inquiries, because I concluded you must have been obliged to give up the party.”

“ Oh yes ! I went. I was very well yesterday ; nothing at all the matter with me till this morning. It would have been strange if I had not gone.”

“ I am very glad you were well enough, and I hope you had a pleasant party.”

“ Nothing remarkable. One always knows beforehand what the dinner will be, and who will be there ; and it is so very uncomfortable not having a carriage of one’s own. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove took me, and we were so crowded ! They are both so very large, and take up so much room ; and Mr. Musgrove always sits forward. So there was I crowded into the back seat with Henrietta and Louisa ; and I think it very likely that my illness to-day may be owing to it.”

A little farther perseverance in patience and forced cheerfulness on Anne’s side produced nearly a cure on Mary’s. She could soon sit upright on the sofa, and began to hope she might be able to leave it by dinner-time. Then, forgetting to think of it, she was at the other end of the room, beautifying a nosegay ; then she ate her cold meat ; and then she was well enough to propose a little walk.

“Where shall we go?” said she, when they were ready. “I suppose you will not like to call at the Great House before they have been to see you?”

“I have not the smallest objection on that account,” replied Anne. “I should never think of standing on such ceremony with people I know so well as Mrs. and the Miss Musgroves.”

“Oh! but they ought to call upon you as soon as possible. They ought to feel what is due to you as *my* sister. However, we may as well go and sit with them a little while, and when we have got that over, we can enjoy our walk.”

Anne had always thought such a style of intercourse highly imprudent; but she had ceased to endeavour to check it, from believing that, though there were on each side continual subjects of offence, neither family could now do without it. To the Great House accordingly they went, to sit the full half-hour in the old-fashioned square parlour, with a small carpet and shining floor, to which the present daughters of the house were gradually giving the proper air of confusion by a grand pianoforte and a harp, flower-stands, and little tables placed in every direction. Oh! could the originals of the portraits against the wainscot, could the gentlemen in brown velvet and the ladies in blue satin have seen what was going on, have been conscious of such an overthrow of all order and neatness! The portraits themselves seemed to be staring in astonishment.

The Musgroves, like their houses, were in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement. The father and mother were in the old English style, and the young people in the new. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove were a very good sort of people; friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant. Their

children had more modern minds and manners. There was a numerous family ; but the only two grown up, excepting Charles, were Henrietta and Louisa, young ladies of nineteen and twenty, who had brought from a school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy, and merry. Their dress had every advantage, their faces were rather pretty, their spirits extremely good, their manners unembarrassed and pleasant ; they were of consequence at home, and favourites abroad. Anne always contemplated them as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance : but still, saved, as we all are, by some comfortable feeling of superiority from wishing for the possibility of exchange, she would not have given up her own more elegant and cultivated mind for all their enjoyments ; and envied them nothing but that seemingly perfect good understanding and agreement together, that good-humoured mutual affection, of which she had known so little herself with either of her sisters.

They were received with great cordiality. Nothing seemed amiss on the side of the Great House family, which was generally, as Anne very well knew, the last to blame. The half-hour was chatted away pleasantly enough ; and she was not at all surprised, at the end of it, to have their walking party joined by both the Miss Musgroves, at Mary's particular invitation.

A Good-tempered Sportsman

[Mary's husband does nothing useful in life, but is devoted to field sports and rather fond of his children.]

Charles Musgrove was civil and agreeable ; in sense and temper he was undoubtedly superior to his wife, but not of powers, or conversation, or grace to make the past, as they were connected together, at all a dangerous contemplation ; though, at the same time Anne could believe, with Lady Russell, that a more equal match might have greatly improved him ; and that a woman of real understanding might have given more consequence to his character, and more usefulness, rationality, and elegance to his habits and pursuits. As it was, he did nothing with much zeal, but sport ; and his time was otherwise trifled away, without benefit from books or anything else. He had very good spirits, which never seemed much affected by his wife's occasional lowness, bore with her unreasonableness sometimes to Anne's admiration, and upon the whole, though there was very often a little disagreement (in which she had sometimes more share than she wished, being appealed to by both parties), they might pass for a happy couple. They were always perfectly agreed in the want of more money, and a strong inclination for a handsome present from his father ; but here, as on most topics, he had the superiority, for while Mary thought it a great shame that such a present was not made, he always contended for his father's having many other uses for his money, and a right to spend it as he liked.

As to the management of their children, his theory

was much better than his wife's, and his practice not so bad. "I could manage them very well, if it were not for Mary's interference," was what Anne often heard him say, and had a good deal of faith in; but when listening in turn to Mary's reproach of, "Charles spoils the children so that I cannot get them into any order," she never had the smallest temptation to say, "Very true."

One of the least agreeable circumstances of her residence there was her being treated with too much confidence by all parties, and being too much in the secret of the complaints of each house. Known to have some influence with her sister, she was continually requested, or at least receiving hints, to exert it beyond what was practicable. "I wish you could persuade Mary not to be always fancying herself ill," was Charles's language; and, in an unhappy mood, thus spoke Mary: "I do believe if Charles were to see me dying, he would not think there was anything the matter with me. I am sure, Anne, if you would, you might persuade him that I really am very ill—a great deal worse than I ever own."

Mary's declaration was, "I hate sending the children to the Great House, though their grandmamma is always wanting to see them, for she humours and indulges them to such a degree, and gives them so much trash and sweet things, that they are sure to come back sick and cross for the rest of the day." And Mrs. Musgrove took the first opportunity of being alone with Anne to say, "Oh! Miss Anne, I cannot help wishing Mrs. Charles had a little of your method with those children. They are quite different creatures with you! But to be sure, in general, they are so spoiled! It is a pity you cannot put your sister in the way of managing them. They are as fine healthy

children as ever were seen, poor little dears ! without partiality ; but Mrs. Charles knows no more how they should be treated——Bless me ! how troublesome they are sometimes. I assure you, Miss Anne, it prevents my wishing to see them at our house so often as I otherwise should. I believe Mrs. Charles is not quite pleased with my not inviting them oftener ; but you know it is very bad to have children with one that one is obliged to be checking every moment : ‘ Don’t do this,’ and ‘ Don’t do that ’ ; or that one can only keep in tolerable order by more cake than is good for them.”

She had this communication, moreover, from Mary. “ Mrs. Musgrove thinks all her servants so steady, that it would be high treason to call it in question ; but I am sure, without exaggeration, that her upper housemaid and laundry-maid, instead of being in their business, are gadding about the village all day long. I meet them wherever I go ; and I declare I never go twice into my nursery without seeing something of them. If Jemima were not the trustiest, steadiest creature in the world, it would be enough to spoil her ; for she tells me they are always tempting her to take a walk with them.” And on Mrs. Musgrove’s side it was, “ I make a rule of never interfering in any of my daughter-in-law’s concerns, for I know it would not do ; but I shall tell *you*, Miss Anne, because you may be able to set things to rights, that I have no very good opinion of Mrs. Charles’s nursery-maid : I hear strange stories of her ; she is always upon the gad ; and from my own knowledge, I can declare, she is such a fine-dressing lady, that she is enough to ruin any servants she comes near. Mrs. Charles quite swears by her, I know ; but I just give you this hint, that you may be upon the watch ; because, if you see

anything amiss, you need not be afraid of mentioning it."

Again, it was Mary's complaint that Mrs. Musgrove was very apt not to give her the precedence that was her due, when they dined at the Great House with other families ; and she did not see any reason why she was to be considered so much at home as to lose her place. And one day, when Anne was walking with only the Miss Musgroves, one of them, after talking of rank, people of rank, and jealousy of rank, said, " I have no scruple of observing to you how nonsensical some persons are about their place, because all the world knows how easy and indifferent you are about it ; but I wish anybody would give Mary a hint that it would be a great deal better if she were not so very tenacious—especially if she would not be always putting herself forward to take place of mamma. Nobody doubts her right to have precedence of mamma, but it would be more becoming in her not to be always insisting on it. It is not that mamma cares about it the least in the world, but I know it is taken notice of by many persons."

How was Anne to set all these matters to rights ? She could do little more than listen patiently soften every grievance, and excuse each to the other ; give them all hints of the forbearance necessary between such near neighbours, and make those hints broadest which were meant for her sister's benefit.

Anne's Old Love

[Anne hears that Captain Wentworth, to whom she had been engaged over seven years ago, is staying in the village.]

Husbands and wives generally understand when opposition will be in vain. Mary knew, from Charles's manner of speaking, that he was quite determined on going, and that it would be of no use to tease him. She said nothing, therefore, till he was out of the room ; but as soon as there was only Anne to hear :—

“ So you and I are to be left to shift by ourselves, with this poor sick child ; and not a creature coming near us all the evening ! I knew how it would be. This is always my luck. If there is anything disagreeable going on men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them. Very unfeeling ! I must say it is very unfeeling of him to be running away from his poor little boy. Talks of his being going on so well ! how does he know that he is going on well, or that there may not be a sudden change half-an-hour hence ? I did not think Charles would have been so unfeeling. So here he is to go away and enjoy himself, and because I am the poor mother, I am not to be allowed to stir ; and yet I am sure, I am more unfit than anybody else to be with the child. My being the mother is the very reason why my feelings should not be tried. I am not at all equal to it. You saw how hysterical I was yesterday.”

“ But that was only the effect of the suddenness of your alarm—of the shock. You will not be hysterical again. I dare say we shall have nothing to distress us. I perfectly understand Mr. Robinson's directions,

and have no fears ; and, indeed, Mary, I cannot wonder at your husband. Nursing does not belong to a man ; it is not his province. A sick child is always the mother's property : her own feelings generally make it so."

" I hope I am as fond of my child as any mother, but I do not know that I am of any more use in the sick-room than Charles, for I cannot be always scolding and teasing a poor child when it is ill ; and you saw, this morning, that if I told him to keep quiet, he was sure to begin kicking about. I have not nerves for the sort of thing."

" But could you be comfortable yourself, to be spending the whole evening away from the poor boy ? "

" Yes ; you see his papa can, and why should not I ? Jemima is so careful ; and she could send us word every hour how he was. I really think Charles might as well have told his father we would all come. I am not more alarmed about little Charles than he is. I was dreadfully alarmed yesterday, but the case is very different to-day."

" Well, if you do not think it too late to give notice for yourself, suppose you were to go, as well as your husband. Leave little Charles to my care. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove cannot think it wrong while I remain with him."

" Are you serious ? " cried Mary, her eyes brightening. " Dear me ! that's a very good thought, very good, indeed. To be sure, I may just as well go as not, for I am of no use at home—am I ? and it only harasses me. You, who have not a mother's feelings, are a great deal the properest person. You can make little Charles do anything ; he always minds you at a word. It will be a great deal better than leaving him with only Jemima. Oh ! I will certainly go ; I am sure

I ought if I can, quite as much as Charles, for they want me excessively to be acquainted with Captain Wentworth, and I know you do not mind being left alone. An excellent thought of yours, indeed, Anne. I will go and tell Charles, and get ready directly. You can send for us, you know, at a moment's notice, if anything is the matter ; but I dare say there will be nothing to alarm you. I should not go, you may be sure, if I did not feel quite at ease about my dear child."

The next moment she was tapping at her husband's dressing-room door, and as Anne followed her upstairs she was in time for the whole conversation, which began with Mary's saying, in a tone of great exultation :

"I mean to go with you, Charles, for I am of no more use at home than you are. If I were to shut myself up for ever with the child, I should not be able to persuade him to do anything he did not like. Anne will stay ; Anne undertakes to stay at home and take care of him. It is Anne's own proposal, and so I shall go with you, which will be a great deal better, for I have not dined at the other house since Tuesday."

"This is very kind of Anne," was her husband's answer, "and I should be very glad to have you go ; but it seems rather hard that she should be left at home by herself, to nurse our sick child."

Anne was now at hand to take up her own cause, and the sincerity of her manner being soon sufficient to convince him, where conviction was at least very agreeable, he had no farther scruples as to her being left to dine alone, though he still wanted her to join them in the evening, when the child might be at rest for the night, and kindly urged her to let him come and fetch her, but she was quite unpersuadable ; and

this being the case, she had ere long the pleasure of seeing them set off together in high spirits. They were gone, she hoped, to be happy, however oddly constructed such happiness might seem; as for herself, she was left with as many sensations of comfort as were, perhaps, ever likely to be hers. She knew herself to be of the first utility to the child; and what was it to her if Frederick Wentworth were only half a mile distant, making himself agreeable to others?

She would have liked to know how he felt as to a meeting. Perhaps indifferent, if indifference could exist under such circumstances. He must be either indifferent or unwilling. Had he wished ever to see her again, he need not have waited till this time; he would have done what she could not but believe that in his place she should have done long ago, when events had been early giving him the independence which alone had been wanting.

Her brother and sister came back delighted with their new acquaintance, and their visit in general. There had been music, singing, talking, laughing, all that was most agreeable; charming manners in Captain Wentworth, no shyness nor reserve; they seemed all to know each other perfectly, and he was coming the very next morning to shoot with Charles. He was to come to breakfast, but not at the Cottage, though that had been proposed at first; but then he had been pressed to come to the Great House instead, and he seemed afraid of being in Mrs. Charles Musgrove's way, on account of the child, and therefore, somehow, they hardly knew how, it ended in Charles's being to meet him to breakfast at his father's.

Anne understood it. He wished to avoid seeing her. He had inquired after her, she found, slightly,

as might suit a former slight acquaintance, seeming to acknowledge such as she had acknowledged, actuated, perhaps, by the same view of escaping introduction when they were to meet.

The morning hours of the Cottage were always later than those of the other house, and on the morrow the difference was so great that Mary and Anne were not more than beginning breakfast when Charles came in to say that they were just setting off, that he was come for his dogs, that his sisters were following with Captain Wentworth; his sisters meaning to visit Mary and the child, and Captain Wentworth proposing also to wait on her for a few minutes if not inconvenient; and though Charles had answered for the child's being in no such state as could make it inconvenient, Captain Wentworth would not be satisfied without his running on to give notice.

Mary, very much gratified by this attention, was delighted to receive him, while a thousand feelings rushed on Anne, of which this was the most consoling, that it would soon be over. And it was soon over. In two minutes after Charles's preparation, the others appeared; they were in the drawing-room. Her eye half met Captain Wentworth's, a bow, a courtesy passed; she heard his voice; he talked to Mary, said all that was right, said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to mark an easy footing; the room seemed full, full of persons and voices, but a few minutes ended it. Charles showed himself at the window, all was ready, their visitor had bowed and was gone, the Miss Musgroves were gone too, suddenly resolving to walk to the end of the village with the sportsmen; the room was cleared, and Anne might finish her breakfast as she could.

"It is over! it is over!" she repeated to herself

again and again, in nervous gratitude. "The worst is over!"

Mary talked, but she could not attend. She had seen him. They had met. They had been once more in the same room.

Soon, however, she began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less. Eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness! What might not eight years do? Events of every description, changes, alienations, removals—all, all must be comprised in it, and oblivion of the past—how natural, how certain, too! It included nearly a third part of her own life.

Alas! with all her reasonings she found that to retentive feelings eight years might be little more than nothing.

Now, how were his sentiments to be read? Was this like wishing to avoid her? And the next moment she was hating herself for the folly which asked the question.

On one other question, which perhaps her utmost wisdom might not have prevented, she was soon spared all suspense; for, after the Miss Musgroves had returned and finished their visit at the Cottage, she had this spontaneous information from Mary:

"Captain Wentworth is not very gallant by you, Anne, though he was so attentive to me. Henrietta asked him what he thought of you, when they went away, and he said, 'You were so altered he should not have known you again.'"

Mary had no feelings to make her respect her sister's in a common way, but she was perfectly unsuspecting of having inflicted any peculiar wound.

“Altered beyond his knowledge!” Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification. Doubtless it was so, and she could take no revenge, for he was not altered, or not for the worse. She had already acknowledged it to herself, and she could not think differently, let him think of her as he would. No; the years which had destroyed her youth and bloom had only given him a more glowing, manly, open look, in no respect lessening his personal advantages. She had seen the same Frederick Wentworth.

“So altered that he should not have known her again!” These were words which could not but dwell with her. Yet she soon began to rejoice that she had heard them. They were of sobering tendency; they allayed agitation; they composed, and consequently must make her happier.

Frederick Wentworth had used such words, or something like them, but without an idea that they would be carried round to her. He had thought her wretchedly altered, and in the first moment of appeal had spoken as he felt. He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill, deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shown a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity.

He had been most warmly attached to her, and had never seen a woman since whom he thought her equal; but, except from some natural sensation of curiosity, he had no desire of meeting her again. Her power with him was gone for ever.

It was now his object to marry. He was rich and being turned on shore fully intended to settle as soon as he could be properly tempted; actually

looking round ready to fall in love with all the speed which a clear head and quick taste could allow. He had a heart for either of the Miss Musgroves if they could catch it ; a heart, in short, for any pleasing young woman who came in his way, excepting Anne Elliot. This was his only secret exception, when he said to his sister, in answer to her suppositions :—

“ Yes, here I am, Sophia, quite ready to make a foolish match. Anybody between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man. Should not this be enough for a sailor, who has had no society among women to make him nice ? ”

He said it, she knew, to be contradicted. His bright proud eye spoke the happy conviction that he was nice ; and Anne Elliot was out of his thoughts, when he more than seriously described the woman he should wish to meet with. “ A strong mind, with sweetness of manner,” made the first and the last of the description.

“ This is the woman I want,” said he. “ Something a little inferior I shall of course put up with, but it must not be much. If I am a fool, I shall be a fool indeed, for I have thought on the subject more than most men.”

The Tenants of Kellynch Hall

[Anne Elliot, while staying with her friend Lady Russell, is taken by her to call on Admiral and Mrs. Croft, the present occupants of her father's house.]

Admiral Croft's manners were not quite of the tone to suit Lady Russell, but they delighted Anne. His goodness of heart and simplicity of character were irresistible.

"Now, this must be very bad for you," he said suddenly rousing from a little reverie, "to be coming and finding us here. I had not recollected it before, I declare, but it must be very bad. But now, do not stand on ceremony. Get up and go over all the rooms in the house, if you like it."

"Another time, sir, I thank you ; not now."

"Well, whenever it suits you. You can slip in from the shrubbery at any time ; and there you will find we keep our umbrellas hanging up by that door. A good place, is not it? But," checking himself, "you will not think it a good place, for yours were always kept in the butler's room. Ay, so it always is, I believe. One man's ways may be as good as another's, but we all like our own best ; and so you must judge for yourself, whether it would be better for you to go about the house or not."

Anne, finding she might decline it, did so very gratefully.

"We have made very few changes either," continued the Admiral, after thinking a moment. "Very few. We told you about the laundry-door at Upper-cross. That has been a very great improvement. The wonder was how any family upon earth could bear

with the inconvenience of its opening as it did so long ! You will tell Sir Walter what we have done, and that Mr. Shepherd thinks it the greatest improvement the house ever had. Indeed, I must do ourselves the justice to say that the few alterations we have made have been all very much for the better. My wife should have the credit of them, however. I have done very little besides sending away some of the large looking-glasses from my dressing-room, which was your father's. A very good man, and very much the gentleman, I am sure ; but I should think, Miss Elliot," looking with serious reflection, " I should think he must be rather a dressy man for his time of life. Such a number of looking-glasses ! oh, Lord ! there was no getting away from one's self. So I got Sophy to lend me a hand, and we soon shifted their quarters ; and now I am quite snug, with my little shaving-glass in one corner and another great thing that I never go near."

Anne, amused in spite of herself, was rather distressed for an answer ; and the Admiral, fearing he might not have been civil enough, took up the subject again, to say—

" The next time you write to your good father, Miss Elliot, pray give my compliments and Mrs. Croft's, and say that we are settled here quite to our liking, and have no fault at all to find with the place. The breakfast-room chimney smokes a little, I grant you, but it is only when the wind is due north and blows hard, which may not happen three times a winter. And take it altogether, now that we have been into most of the houses hereabouts and can judge, there is not one that we like better than this. Pray say so, with my compliments. He will be glad to hear it."

Lady Russell and Mrs. Croft were very well pleased

with each other: but the acquaintance which this visit began was fated not to proceed far at present; for when it was returned, the Crofts announced themselves to be going away for a few weeks, to visit their connections in the north of the country, and probably might not be at home again before Lady Russell would be removing to Bath.

A Supposed Admirer

[Anne, who has been staying at Lyme Regis with the Musgroves—one of whom, Louisa, has been seriously ill as the result of an accident—hears that a Captain Benwick is supposed to have lost his heart to her.]

Though Charles and Mary had remained at Lyme much longer after Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove's going than Anne conceived they could have been at all wanted, they were yet the first of the family to be at home again; and as soon as possible after their return to Uppercross they drove over to the Lodge. They had left Louisa beginning to sit up; but her head, though clear, was exceedingly weak, and her nerves susceptible to the highest extreme of tenderness; and though she might be pronounced to be altogether doing very well, it was still impossible to say when she might be able to bear the removal home; and her father and mother, who must return in time to receive their younger children for the Christmas holidays, had hardly a hope of being allowed to bring her with them.

They had been all in lodgings together. Mrs. Musgrove had got Mrs. Harville's children away as much as she could, every possible supply from Uppercross had been furnished, to lighten the inconvenience

to the Harvilles, while the Harvilles had been wanting them to come to dinner every day ; and, in short, it seemed to have been only a struggle on each side as to which should be most disinterested and hospitable.

Mary had had her evils ; but upon the whole, as was evident by her staying so long, she had found more to enjoy than to suffer. Charles Hayter had been at Lyme oftener than suited her ; and when they dined with the Harvilles there had been only a maid-servant to wait, and at first Mrs. Harville had not always given Mrs. Musgrove precedence ; but then she had received so very handsome an apology from her on finding out whose daughter she was, and there had been so much going on every day, there had been so many walks between their lodgings and the Harvilles, and she had got books from the library, and changed them so often, that the balance had certainly been much in favour of Lyme. She had been taken to Charmouth, too, and she had bathed, and she had gone to church, and there were a great many more people to look at in the church at Lyme than at Uppercross ; and all this, joined to the sense of being so very useful, had made really an agreeable fortnight.

Anne inquired after Captain Benwick. Mary's face was clouded directly. Charles laughed.

“ Oh ! Captain Benwick is very well, I believe, but he is a very odd young man. I do not know what he would be at. We asked him to come home with us for a day or two : Charles undertook to give him some shooting, and he seemed quite delighted, and for my part, I thought it was all settled, when behold ! on Tuesday night he made a very awkward sort of an excuse ; ‘ he never shot,’ and he had ‘ been quite misunderstood,’ and he had promised this and he had promised that, and the end of it was, I found that

he did not mean to come. I suppose he was afraid of finding it dull ; but upon my word I should have thought we were lively enough at the Cottage for such a heart-broken man as Captain Benwick."

Charles laughed again, and said, " Now, Mary, you know very well how it really was. It was all your doing," turning to Anne. " He fancied that if he went with us he should find you close by : he fancied everybody to be living in Uppercross ; and when he discovered that Lady Russell lived three miles off, his heart failed him, and he had not courage to come. That is the fact upon my honour. Mary knows it is."

But Mary did not give into it very graciously, whether from not considering Captain Benwick entitled by birth and situation to be in love with an Elliot, or from not wanting to believe Anne a greater attraction to Uppercross than herself, must be left to be guessed. Anne's good-will, however, was not to be lessened by what she heard. She boldly acknowledged herself flattered, and continued her inquiries.

" Oh ! he talks of you," cried Charles, " in such terms——" Mary interrupted him. " I declare, Charles, I never heard him mention Anne twice all the time I was there. I declare, Anne, he never talks of you at all."

" No," admitted Charles, " I do not know that he ever does, in a general way ; but, however, it is a very clear thing that he admires you exceedingly. His head is full of some books that he is reading upon your recommendation, and he wants to talk to you about them ; he has found out something or other in one of them which he thinks—oh ! I cannot pretend to remember it, but it was something very fine—I overheard him telling Henrietta all about it ; and then

‘Miss Elliot’ was spoken of in the highest terms! Now, Mary, I declare it was so, I heard it myself, and you were in the other room. ‘Elegance, sweetness, beauty.’ Oh! there was no end of Miss Elliot’s charms.”

“And I am sure,” cried Mary, warmly, “it was very little to his credit if he did. Miss Harville only died last June. Such a heart is very little worth having, is it, Lady Russell? I am sure you will agree with me.”

“I must see Captain Benwick before I decide,” said Lady Russell, smiling.

“And that you are very likely to do very soon, I can tell you, ma’am,” said Charles. “Though he had not nerves for coming away with us, and setting off again afterwards to pay a formal visit here, he will make his way over to Kellynch one day by himself, you may depend on it. I told him the distance and the road, and I told him of the church’s being so very well worth seeing; for as he has a taste for those sort of things, I thought that would be a good excuse, and he listened with all his understanding and soul; and I am sure, from his manner, that you will have him calling here soon. So, I give you notice, Lady Russell.

“Any acquaintance of Anne’s will be always welcome to me,” was Lady Russell’s kind answer.

“Oh! as to being Anne’s acquaintance,” said Mary, “I think he is rather my acquaintance, for I have been seeing him every day this last fortnight.”

“Well, as your joint acquaintance, then, I shall be very happy to see Captain Benwick.”

“You will not find anything very agreeable in him, I assure you, ma’am. He is one of the dullest young men that ever lived. He has walked with me, sometimes, from one end of the sands to the other,

without saying a word. He is not at all a well-bred young man. I am sure you will not like him."

"There we differ Mary" said Anne. "I think Lady Russell would like him. I think she would be so much pleased with his mind that she would very soon see no deficiency in his manner."

"So do I, Anne" said Charles. "I am sure Lady Russell would like him. He is just Lady Russell's sort. Give him a book and he will read all day long."

"Yes, that he will!" exclaimed Mary tauntingly. "He will sit poring over his book, and not know when a person speaks to him, or when one drops one's scissors, or anything that happens. Do you think Lady Russell would like that?"

Lady Russell could not help laughing. "Upon my word" said she "I should not have supposed that my opinion of any one could have admitted of such difference of conjecture, steady and matter of fact as I may call myself. I have really a curiosity to see the person who can give occasion to such directly opposite notions. I wish he may be induced to call here. And when he does, Mary, you may depend upon hearing my opinion; but I am determined not to judge him beforehand."

"You will not like him: I will answer for it."

Lady Russell began talking of something else. Mary spoke with animation of their meeting with, or rather missing, Mr. Elliot so extraordinarily.

The Social Attractions of Bath

[During his absence from Kellynch Hall, Anne's father resides at Bath, and she goes to stay with him and her eldest sister.]

Sir Walter had taken a very good house in Camden Place, a lofty dignified situation, such as becomes a man of consequence ; and both he and Elizabeth were settled there, much to their satisfaction.

Anne entered it with a sinking heart, anticipating an imprisonment of many months, and anxiously saying to herself, " Oh ! when shall I leave you again ? " A degree of unexpected cordiality, however, in the welcome she received, did her good. Her father and sister were glad to see her, for the sake of showing her the house and furniture, and met her with kindness. Her making a fourth, when they sat down to dinner, was noticed as an advantage.

Mrs. Clay was very pleasant and very smiling, but her courtesies and smiles were more a matter of course. Anne had always felt that she would pretend what was proper on her arrival, but the complaisance of the others was unlooked for. They were evidently in excellent spirits, and she was soon to listen to the causes. They had no inclination to listen to her. After laying out for some compliments of being deeply regretted in their old neighbourhood, which Anne could not pay, they had only a few faint inquiries to make, before the talk must be all their own. Upper-cross excited no interest, Kellynch very little : it was all Bath.

They had the pleasure of assuring her that Bath more than answered their expectations in every re-

spect. Their house was undoubtedly the best in Camden Place, their drawing-rooms had many decided advantages over all the others which they had either seen or heard of, and the superiority was not less in the style of the fitting-up or the taste of the furniture. Their acquaintance was exceedingly sought after. Everybody was wanting to visit them. They had drawn back from many introductions, and still were perpetually having cards left by people of whom they knew nothing.

Here were funds of enjoyment! Could Anne wonder that her father and sister were happy? She might not wonder, but she must sigh that her father should feel no degradation in his change, should see nothing to regret in the duties and dignity of the resident landholder, should find so much to be vain of in the littlenesses of a town; and she must sigh, and smile, and wonder too, as Elizabeth threw open the folding-doors, and walked with exultation from one drawing-room to the other, boasting of their space: at the possibility of that woman, who had been mistress of Kellynch Hall, finding extent to be proud of between two walls, perhaps thirty feet asunder.

But this was not all which they had to make them happy. They had Mr. Elliot, too. Anne had a great deal to hear of Mr. Elliot. He was not only pardoned, they were delighted with him. He had been in Bath about a fortnight; he had passed through Bath in November, on his way to London, when the intelligence of Sir Walter's being settled there had of course reached him, though only twenty-four hours in the place, but he had not been able to avail himself of it; but he had now been a fortnight in Bath, and his first object on arriving had been to leave his card in Camden Place, following it up by such assiduous

endeavours to meet, and when they did meet, by such great openness of conduct, such readiness to apologise for the past, such solicitude to be received as a relation again, that their former good understanding was completely re-established.

They had not a fault to find in him. He had explained away all the appearance of neglect on his own side. It had originated in misapprehension entirely. He had never had an idea of throwing himself off: he had feared that he was thrown off, but knew not why, and delicacy had kept him silent. Upon the hint of having spoken disrespectfully or carelessly of the family and the family honours, he was quite indignant. He, who had ever boasted of being an Elliot, and whose feelings, as to connection, were only too strict to suit the unfeudal tone of the present day. He was astonished, indeed, but his character and general conduct must refute it. He could refer Sir Walter to all who knew him; and certainly, the pains he had been taking on this, the first opportunity of reconciliation, to be restored to the footing of a relation and heir-presumptive, was a strong proof of his opinions on the subject.

The circumstances of his marriage, too, were found to admit of much extenuation. This was an article not to be entered on by himself; but a very intimate friend of his, a Colonel Wallis, a highly respectable man, perfectly the gentleman (and not an ill-looking man, Sir Walter added), who was living in very good style in Marlborough Buildings, and had, at his own particular request, been admitted to their acquaintance through Mr. Elliot, had mentioned one or two things relative to the marriage, which made a material difference in the discredit of it.

Colonel Wallis had known Mr. Elliot long, had been

well acquainted also with his wife, had perfectly understood the whole story. She was certainly not a woman of family, but well educated, accomplished, rich, and excessively in love with his friend. There had been the charm. She had sought him. Without that attraction, not all her money would have tempted Elliot, and Sir Walter was, moreover, assured of her having been a very fine woman. Here was a good deal to soften the business. A very fine woman with a large fortune, in love with him ! Sir Walter seemed to admit it as a complete apology ; and though Elizabeth could not see the circumstance in quite so favourable a light, she allowed it to be a great extenuation.

Mr. Elliot had called repeatedly, had dined with them once, evidently delighted by the distinction of being asked, for they gave no dinners in general ; delighted, in short, by every proof of cousinly notice, and placing his whole happiness on being on intimate terms in Camden Place.

Anne listened, but without understanding it. Allowances, large allowances must be made for the ideas of those who spoke. She heard it all under embellishment. All that sounded extravagant or irrational in the progress of the reconciliation might have no origin but in the language of the relators. Still, however, she had the sensation of there being something more than immediately appeared, in Mr. Elliot's wishing, after an interval of so many years, to be well received by them. In a worldly view, he had nothing to gain by being on terms with Sir Walter ; nothing to risk by a state of variance. In all probability he was already the richer of the two, and the Kellynch estate would as surely be his hereafter as the title. A sensible man, and he had looked like a *very* sensible man, why should it be an object to him ?

She could only offer one solution : it was, perhaps, for Elizabeth's sake. There might really have been a liking formerly, though convenience and accident had drawn him a different way ; and now that he could afford to please himself he might mean to pay his addresses to her. Elizabeth was certainly very handsome, with well-bred elegant manner, and her character might never have been penetrated by Mr. Elliot knowing her but in public and when very young himself. How her temper and understanding might bear the investigation of his present keener time of life was another concern and rather a fearful one. Most earnestly did she wish that he might not be too nice, or too observant if Elizabeth were his object ; and that Elizabeth was disposed to believe herself so, and that her friend, Mrs. Clay, was encouraging the idea, seemed apparent by a glance or two between them, while Mr. Elliot's frequent visits were talked of.

Anne mentioned the glimpses she had had of him at Lyme, but without being much attended to. " Oh ! yes, perhaps, it had been Mr. Elliot. They did not know. It might be him, perhaps." They could not listen to her description of him. They were describing him themselves ; Sir Walter especially. He did justice to his very gentlemanlike appearance, his air of elegance and fashion, his good-shaped face, his sensible eye ; but, at the same time, " must lament his being very much under-hung, a defect which time seemed to have increased ; nor could he pretend to say that ten years had not altered almost every feature for the worse. Mr. Elliot appeared to think that he (Sir Walter) was looking exactly as he had done when they last parted " ; but Sir Walter had " not been able to return the compliment entirely, which had embar-

passed him. He did not mean to complain, however. Mr. Elliot was better to look at than most men, and he had no objection to being seen with him anywhere."

Mr. Elliot, and his friends in Marlborough Buildings, were talked of the whole evening. "Colonel Wallis had been so impatient to be introduced to them; and Mr. Elliot so anxious that he should, and there was a Mrs. Wallis, at present known only to them by description, as she was in daily expectation of her confinement; but Mr. Elliot spoke of her as "a most charming woman, quite worthy of being known in Camden Place," and as soon as she recovered they were to be acquainted. Sir Walter thought much of Mrs. Wallis; she was said to be an excessively pretty woman, beautiful. "He longed to see her. He hoped she might make some amends for the many very plain faces he was continually passing in the streets. The worst of Bath was the number of its plain women. He did not mean to say that there were no pretty women, but the number of the plain was out of all proportion. He had frequently observed, as he walked that one handsome face would be followed by thirty, or five-and-thirty frights; and once, as he had stood in a shop in Bond Street, he had counted eighty-seven women go by, one after another, without there being a tolerable face among them. It had been a frosty morning, to be sure, a sharp frost, which hardly one woman in a thousand could stand the test of. But still, there certainly were a dreadful multitude of ugly women in Bath; and as for the men! they were infinitely worse. Such scarecrows as the streets were full of! It was evident how little the women were used to the sight of anything tolerable, by the effect which a man of decent appearance produced. He

had never walked anywhere arm-in-arm with Colonel Wallis (who was a fine military figure, though sandy-haired) without observing that every woman's eye was upon him ; every woman's eye was sure to be upon Colonel Wallis." Modest Sir Walter ! He was not allowed to escape, however. His daughter and Mrs. Clay united in hinting that Colonel Wallis's companion might have as good a figure as Colonel Wallis, and certainly was not sandy-haired.

"How is Mary looking ?" said Sir Walter, in the height of his good humour. "The last time I saw her she had a red nose, but I hope that may not happen every day."

"Oh, no, that must have been quite accidental. In general she has been in very good health and very good looks since Michaelmas."

"If I thought it would not tempt her to go out in sharp winds, and grow coarse, I would send her a new hat, and pelisse."

Hope Returns to Anne

[Anne, who still loves Wentworth, learns that he is free, and that Louisa Musgrove, whom she had regarded as his future wife, is almost certain to marry Captain Benwick.]

It was the beginning of February ; and Anne, having been a month in Bath, was growing very eager for news from Uppercross and Lyme. She wanted to hear much more than Mary communicated. It was three weeks since she had heard at all. She only knew that Henrietta was at home again : and that Louisa, though considered to be recovering fast, was still at Lyme ; and she was thinking of them all very intently one evening, when a thicker letter than usual from Mary was delivered to her ; and, to quicken the pleasure and surprise, with Admiral and Mrs. Croft's compliments.

The Crofts must be in Bath ! A circumstance to interest her. They were people whom her heart turned to very naturally.

"What is this ?" cried Sir Walter. "The Crofts arrived in Bath ? The Crofts who rent Kellynch ? What have they brought you ?"

"A letter from Uppercross Cottage, sir."

"Oh ! those letters are convenient passports. They secure an introduction. I should have visited Admiral Croft, however, at any rate. I know what is due to my tenant."

Anne could listen no longer ; she could not even have told how the poor Admiral's complexion escaped ; her letter engrossed her. It had been begun several days back.

“ February 1——.

“ MY DEAR ANNE,—I make no apology for my silence because I know how little people think of letters in such a place as Bath. You must be a great deal too happy to care for Uppercross, which, as you well know, affords little to write about. We have had a very dull Christmas ; Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove have not had one dinner-party all the holidays. I do not reckon the Hayters as anybody. The holidays, however, are over at last : I believe no children ever had such long ones. I am sure I had not. The house was cleared yesterday, except of the little Harvilles ; but you will be surprised to hear that they have never gone home. Mrs. Harville must be an odd mother to part with them so long. I do not understand it. They are not at all nice children, in my opinion ; but Mrs. Musgrove seems to like them quite as well, if not better, than her grandchildren. What dreadful weather we have had ! It may not be felt in Bath, with your nice pavements ; but in the country it is of some consequence. I have not had a creature call on me since the second week in January, except Charles Hayter, who has been calling much oftener than was welcome. Between ourselves, I think it a great pity Henrietta did not remain at Lyme as long as Louisa ; it would have kept her a little out of his way. The carriage is gone to-day, to bring Louisa and the Harvilles to-morrow. We are not asked to dine with them, however, till the day after, Mrs. Musgrove is so afraid of her being fatigued by the journey, which is not very likely, considering the care that will be taken of her ; and it would be much more convenient to me to dine there to-morrow. I am glad you find Mr. Elliot so agreeable, and wish I could be

acquainted with him too ; but I have my usual luck : I am always out of the way when anything desirable is going on ; always the last of my family to be noticed. What an immense time Mrs. Clay has been staying with Elizabeth ! Does she never mean to go away ? But, perhaps, if she were to leave the room vacant, we might not be invited. Let me know what you think of this. I do not expect my children to be asked, you know. I can leave them at the Great House very well, for a month or six weeks. I have this moment heard that the Crofts are going to Bath almost immediately : they think the Admiral gouty. Charles heard it quite by chance : they have not had the civility to give me any notice, or offer to take anything. I do not think they improve at all as neighbours. We see nothing of them, and this is really an instance of gross inattention. Charles joins me in love, and everything proper. Yours affectionately,

“ MARY M——.

“ I am sorry to say that I am very far from well ; and Jemima has just told me that the butcher says there is a bad sore-throat very much about. I dare say I shall catch it ; and my sore-throats, you know, are always worse than anybody's.”

So ended the first part, which had been afterwards put into an envelope, containing nearly as much more.

“ I kept my letter open, that I might send you word how Louisa bore her journey, and now I am extremely glad I did, having a great deal to add. In the first place, I had a note from Mrs. Croft yesterday, offering to convey anything to you ; a very kind, friendly note indeed, addressed to me,

just as it ought ; I shall therefore be able to make my letter as long as I like. The Admiral does not seem very ill, and I sincerely hope Bath will do him all the good he wants. I shall be truly glad to have them back again. Our neighbourhood cannot spare such a pleasant family. But now for Louisa. I have something to communicate that will astonish you not a little. She and the Harvilles came on Tuesday very safely, and in the evening we went to ask her how she did, when we were rather surprised not to find Captain Benwick of the party, for he had been invited as well as the Harvilles ; and what do you think was the reason ? Neither more nor less than his being in love with Louisa, and not choosing to venture to Uppercross till he had had an answer from Mr. Musgrove ; for it was all settled between him and her before she came away, and he had written to her father by Captain Harville. True, upon my honour ! Are you not astonished ? I shall be surprised at least if you ever received a hint of it, for I never did. Mrs. Musgrove protests solemnly that she knew nothing of the matter. We are all very well pleased, however ; for though it is not equal to her marrying Captain Wentworth, it is infinitely better than Charles Hayter ; and Mr. Musgrove has written his consent, and Captain Benwick is expected to-day. Mrs. Harville says her husband feels a good deal on his poor sister's account ; but, however, Louisa is a great favourite with both. Indeed, Mrs. Harville and I quite agree that we love her the better for having nursed her. Charles wonders what Captain Wentworth will say ; but if you remember, I never thought him attached to Louisa ; I never could see anything of it. And this is the end, you see, of Captain Benwick's being

supposed to be an admirer of yours. How Charles could take such a thing into his head was always incomprehensible to me. I hope he will be more agreeable now. Certainly not a great match for Louisa Musgrove, but a million times better than marrying among the Hayters."

The News is Confirmed

[The Crofts also convey the welcome news that Captain Wentworth, who is Mrs. Croft's brother, is not the destined husband of Louisa. In the end, Anne and Wentworth renew their engagement, and are married very soon afterwards.]

The Crofts knew quite as many people in Bath as they wished for, and considered their intercourse with the Elliots as a mere matter of form, and not in the least likely to afford them any pleasure. They brought with them their country habit of being always together. He was ordered to walk to keep off the gout, and Mrs. Croft seemed to go shares with him in everything, and to walk for her life to do him good. Anne saw them wherever she went. Lady Russell took her out in her carriage almost every morning, and she never failed to think of them, and never failed to see them. Knowing their feelings as she did, it was a most attractive picture of happiness to her. She always watched them as long as she could, delighted to fancy she understood what they might be talking of, as they walked along in happy independence, or equally delighted to see the Admiral's hearty shake of the hand when he encountered an old friend, and observe their eagerness

of conversation when occasionally forming into a little knot of the navy, Mrs. Croft looking as intelligent and keen as any of the officers around her.

Anne was too much engaged with Lady Russell to be often walking herself ; but it so happened that one morning, about a week or ten days after the Crofts' arrival, it suited her best to leave her friend, or her friend's carriage, in the lower part of the town, and return alone to Camden Place, and in walking up Milsom Street she had the good fortune to meet with the Admiral. He was standing by himself, at a printshop window, with his hands behind him, in earnest contemplation of some print, and she not only might have passed him unseen, but was obliged to touch as well as address him before she could catch his notice. When he did perceive and acknowledge her, however, it was done with all his usual frankness and good-humour. " Ha ! is it you ? Thank you, thank you. This is treating me like a friend. Here am I, you see, staring at a picture. I can never get by this shop without stopping. But what a thing here is by way of a boat ! Do look at it. Did you ever see the like ? What queer fellows your fine painters must be, to think that anybody would venture their lives in such a shapeless old cockleshell as that ? And yet here are two gentlemen stuck up in it mightily at their ease, and looking about them at the rocks and mountains, as if they were not to be upset the next moment, which they certainly must be. I wonder where that boat was built ! " laughing heartily ; " I would not venture over a horsepond in it. Well," turning away, " now, where are you bound ? Can I go anywhere for you, or with you ? Can I be of any use ? "

" None, I thank you, unless you will give me the

pleasure of your company the little way our road lies together. I am going home."

"That I will, with all my heart, and farther too. Yes, yes, we will have a snug walk together, and I have something to tell you as we go along. There, take my arm; that's right; I do not feel comfortable if I have not a woman there. Lord! what a boat it is!" taking a last look at the picture, as they began to be in motion.

"Did you say that you had something to tell me sir?"

"Yes, I have, presently. But here comes a friend, Captain Brigden; I shall only say, 'How d'ye do?' as we pass however. I shall not stop. 'How d'ye do?' Brigden stares to see anybody with me but my wife. She, poor soul, is tied by the leg. She has a blister on one of her heels, as large as a three-shilling piece. If you look across the street you will see Admiral Brand coming down with his brother. Shabby fellows, both of them! I am glad they are not on this side of the way. Sophy cannot bear them. They played me a pitiful trick once: got away some of my best men. I will tell you the whole story another time. There comes old Sir Archibald Drew and his grandson. Look, he sees us; he kisses his hand to you; he takes you for my wife. Ah! the peace has come too soon for that youngster. Poor old Sir Archibald! How do you like Bath, Miss Elliot? It suits us very well. We are always meeting with some old friend or other; the streets full of them every morning; sure to have plenty of chat; and then we get away from them all, and shut ourselves into our lodgings, and draw in our chairs, and are as snug as if we were at Kellynch, ay, or as we used to be even at North Yarmouth and Deal. We do not like

our lodgings here the worse, I can tell you, for putting us in mind of those we first had at North Yarmouth. The wind blows through one of the cupboards just in the same way."

When they were got a little farther Anne ventured to press again for what he had to communicate. She had hoped when clear of Milsom Street to have her curiosity gratified ; but she was still obliged to wait, for the Admiral had made up his mind not to begin till they had gained the greater space and quiet of Belmont ; and as she was not really Mrs. Croft she must let him have his own way. As soon as they were fairly ascending Belmont, he began—

" Well, now you shall hear something that will surprise you. But first of all, you must tell me the name of the young lady I am going to talk about. That young lady, you know, that we have all been so concerned for. The Miss Musgrove that all this has been happening to. Her Christian name: I always forget it."

Anne had been ashamed to appear to comprehend so soon as she really did ; but now she could safely suggest the name of " Louisa."

" Ay, ay, Miss Louisa Musgrove, that is the name. I wish young ladies had not such a number of fine Christian names. I should never be out if they were all Sophys, or something of that sort. Well, this Miss Louisa, we all thought, you know, was to marry Frederick. He was courting her week after week. The only wonder was, what they could be waiting for, till the business at Lyme came ; then, indeed, it was clear enough that they must wait till her brain was set to right. But even then there was something odd in their way of going on. Instead of staying at Lyme, he went off to Plymouth, and then he went off to

see Edward. When we came back from Minehead he was gone down to Edward's, and there he has been ever since. We have seen nothing of him since November. Even Sophy could not understand it. But now, the matter has taken the strangest turn of all ; for this young lady, this same Miss Musgrove, instead of being to marry Frederick, is to marry James Benwick. You know James Benwick ? ”

“ A little. I am a little acquainted with Captain Benwick ? ”

“ Well, she is to marry him. Nay, most likely they are married already, for I do not know what they should wait for.”

“ I thought Captain Benwick a very pleasing young man,” said Anne, “ and I understand that he bears an excellent character.”

“ Oh ! yes, yes, there is not a word to be said against James Benwick. He is only a commander, it is true, made last summer, and these are bad times for getting on, but he has not another fault that I know of. An excellent, good-hearted fellow, I assure you : a very active, zealous officer, too, which is more than you would think for, perhaps, for that soft sort of manner does not do him justice.”

“ Indeed, you are mistaken there, sir : I should never augur want of spirit from Captain Benwick's manners. I thought them very pleasing, and I will answer for it, they would generally please.”

“ Well, well, ladies are the best judges ; but James Benwick is rather too piano for me ; and though very likely it is all our partiality, Sophy and I cannot help thinking Frederick's manners better than his. There is something about Frederick more to our taste.”

Anne was caught. She had only meant to oppose

the too common idea of spirit and gentleness being incompatible with each other, not at all to represent Captain Benwick's manners as the very best that could possibly be ; and, after a little hesitation, she was beginning to say, " I was not entering into any comparison of the two friends ; " but the Admiral interrupted her with—

" And the thing is certainly true. It is not a mere bit of gossip. We have it from Frederick himself. His sister had a letter from him yesterday, in which he tells us of it, and he had just had it in a letter from Harville, written upon the spot, from Uppercross. I fancy they are all at Uppercross."

This was an opportunity which Anne could not resist ; she said, therefore, " I hope, Admiral, I hope there is nothing in the style of Captain Wentworth's letter to make you and Mrs. Croft particularly uneasy. It did certainly seem, last autumn, as if there were an attachment between him and Louisa Musgrove ; but I hope it may be understood to have worn out on each side equally, and without violence. I hope his letter does not breathe the spirit of an ill-used man."

" Not at all, not at all : there is not an oath nor a murmur from beginning to end."

Anne looked down to hide her smile.

" No, no ; Frederick is not a man to whine and complain ; he has too much spirit for that. If the girl likes another man better, it is very fit she should have him."

" Certainly. But what I mean is, that I hope there is nothing in Captain Wentworth's manner of writing to make you suppose he thinks himself ill-used by his friend, which might appear, you know, without it being absolutely said. I should be very sorry that

such a friendship as has subsisted between him and Captain Benwick should be destroyed, or even wounded by a circumstance of this sort."

"Yes, yes, I understand you. But there is nothing at all of that nature in the letter. He does not give the least fling at Benwick; does not so much as say, 'I wonder at it. I have a reason of my own for wondering at it.' No, you would not guess, from his way of writing, that he had ever thought of this Miss (what's her name?) for himself. He very handsomely hopes they will be happy together; and there is nothing very unforgiving in that, I think."

Anne did not receive the perfect conviction which the Admiral meant to convey, but it would have been useless to press the inquiry farther. She therefore satisfied herself with commonplace remarks or quiet attention, and the Admiral had it all his own way.

"Poor Frederick!" said he, at last. "Now he must begin all over again with somebody else. I think we must get him to Bath. Sophy must write, and beg him to come to Bath. Here are pretty girls enough, I am sure. It would be of no use to go to Uppercross again, for that other Miss Musgrove, I find, is bespoke by her cousin, the young parson. Do not you think, Miss Elliot, we had better try to get him to Bath?"

Emma

[“ *Hartfield* ” and its occupants, their way of life and intimacies are described.]

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home, and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence ; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father ; and had, in consequence of her sister’s marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses ; and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection.

Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr. Woodhouse’s family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between *them* it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint ; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked ; highly esteeming Miss Taylor’s judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

The real evils, indeed, of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself : these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

Sorrow came—a gentle sorrow—but not at all in the shape of any disagreeable consciousness. Miss Taylor married. It was Miss Taylor's loss which first brought grief. It was on the wedding day of this beloved friend that Emma first sat in mournful thought of any continuance. The wedding over, and the bride people gone, her father and herself were left to dine together, with no prospect of a third to cheer a long evening. Her father composed himself to sleep after dinner, as usual, and she had then only to sit and think of what she had lost.

The event had every promise of happiness for her friend. Mr. Weston was a man of unexceptionable character, easy fortune, suitable age, and pleasant manners ; and there was some satisfaction in considering with what self-denying, generous friendship she had always wished and promoted the match ; but it was a black morning's work for her. The want of Miss Taylor would be felt every hour of every day. She recalled her past kindness—the kindness, the affection of sixteen years—how she had taught and how she had played with her from five years old—how she had devoted all her powers to attach and amuse her in health—and how nursed her through the various illnesses of childhood. A large debt of gratitude was owing here ; but the intercourse of the last seven years, the equal footing and perfect unreserve which had soon followed Isabella's marriage,

on their being left to each other, was yet a dearer, tenderer recollection. It had been a friend and companion such as few possessed : intelligent, well-informed, useful, gentle, knowing all the ways of the family, interested in all its concerns, and peculiarly interested in herself, in every pleasure, every scheme of hers ;—one to whom she could speak every thought as it arose, and who had such an affection for her as could never find fault.

How was she to bear the change ? It was true that her friend was going only half a mile from them ; but Emma was aware that great must be the difference between a Mrs. Weston, only half a mile from them, and a Miss Taylor in the house ; and with all her advantages, natural and domestic, she was now in great danger of suffering from intellectual solitude. She dearly loved her father, but he was no companion for her. He could not meet her in conversation, rational or playful.

The evil of the actual disparity in their ages (and Mr. Woodhouse had not married early) was much increased by his constitution and habits ; for having been a valetudinarian all his life, without activity of mind or body, he was a much older man in ways than in years ; and though everywhere beloved for the friendliness of his heart and his amiable temper, his talents could not have recommended him at any time.

Her sister, though comparatively but little removed by matrimony, being settled in London, only sixteen miles off, was much beyond her daily reach ; and many a long October and November evening must be struggled through at Hartfield, before Christmas brought the next visit from Isabella and her husband, and their little children, to fill the house, and give her pleasant society again.

Highbury, the large and populous village almost amounting to a town, to which Hartfield, in spite of its separate lawn, and shrubberies, and name, did really belong, afforded her no equals. The Wood-houses were first in consequence there. All looked up to them. She had many acquaintances in the place, for her father was universally civil, but not one among them who could be accepted in lieu of Miss Taylor for even half a day. It was a melancholy change ; and Emma could not but sigh over it, and wish for impossible things, till her father awoke, and made it necessary to be cheerful. His spirits required support. He was a nervous man, easily depressed ; fond of everybody that he was used to, and hating to part with them ; hating change of every kind. Matrimony, as the origin of change, was always disagreeable ; and he was by no means yet reconciled to his own daughter's marrying, nor could ever speak of her but with compassion, though it had been entirely a match of affection, when he was now obliged to part with Miss Taylor too ; and from his habits of gentle selfishness, and of being never able to suppose that other people could feel differently from himself, he was very much disposed to think Miss Taylor had done as sad a thing for herself as for them, and would have been a great deal happier if she had spent all the rest of her life at Hartfield. Emma smiled and chatted as cheerfully as she could, to keep him from such thoughts ; but when tea came, it was impossible for him not to say exactly as he had said at dinner—

“ Poor Miss Taylor !—I wish she were here again. What a pity it is that Mr. Weston ever thought of her ! ”

“ I cannot agree with you, papa ; you know I cannot. Mr. Weston is such a good-humoured,

pleasant, excellent man, that he thoroughly deserves a good wife ; and you would not have had Miss Taylor live with us for ever, and bear all my odd humours, when she might have a house of her own ? ”

“ A house of her own !—but where is the advantage of a house of her own ? This is three times as large ; —and you have never any odd humours, my dear.”

“ How often we shall be going to see them, and they coming to see us !—We shall be always meeting ! *We* must begin ; we must go and pay our wedding-visit very soon.”

“ My dear, how am I to get so far ? Randalls is such a distance. I could not walk half so far.”

“ No, papa ; nobody thought of your walking. We must go in the carriage, to be sure.”

“ The carriage ! But James will not like to put the horses to for such a little way ;—and where are the poor horses to be while we are paying our visit ? ”

“ They are to be put into Mr. Weston’s stable, papa. You know we have settled all that already. We talked it all over with Mr. Weston last night. And as for James, you may be very sure he will always like going to Randalls, because of his daughter’s being housemaid there. I only doubt whether he will ever take us anywhere else. That was your doing, papa. You got Hannah that good place. Nobody thought of Hannah till you mentioned her —James is so obliged to you ! ”

“ I am very glad I did think of her. It was very lucky, for I would not have had poor James think himself slighted upon any account ; and I am sure she will make a very good servant ; she is a civil, pretty-spoken girl ; I have a great opinion of her. Whenever I see her, she always curtsies and asks me how I do, in a very pretty manner ; and when you

have had her here to do needlework, I observe she always turns the lock of the door the right way and never bangs it. I am sure she will be an excellent servant ; and it will be a great comfort to poor Miss Taylor to have somebody about her that she is used to see. Whenever James goes over to see his daughter you know, she will be hearing of us. He will be able to tell her how we all are."

Emma spared no exertions to maintain this happier flow of ideas, and hoped, by the help of backgammon, to get her father tolerably through the evening, and be attacked by no regrets but her own. The backgammon-table was placed ; but a visitor immediately afterwards walked in and made it unnecessary.

Mr. Knightley, a sensible man about seven or eight-and-thirty, was not only a very old and intimate friend of the family, but particularly connected with it, as the elder brother of Isabella's husband. He lived about a mile from Highbury, was a frequent visitor, and always welcome, and at this time more welcome than usual, as coming directly from their mutual connections in London. He had returned to a late dinner after some days' absence, and now walked up to Hartfield to say that all were well in Brunswick Square. It was a happy circumstance, and animated Mr. Woodhouse for some time. Mr. Knightley had a cheerful manner, which always did him good ; and his many inquiries after " poor Isabella " and her children were answered most satisfactorily. When this was over, Mr. Woodhouse gratefully observed—

" It is very kind of you, Mr. Knightley, to come out at this late hour to call upon us. I am afraid you must have had a shocking walk."

" Not at all, sir. It is a beautiful moonlight

night; and so mild that I must draw back from your great fire."

"But you must have found it very damp and dirty. I wish you may not catch cold."

"Dirty, sir! Look at my shoes. Not a speck on them."

"Well! that is quite surprising, for we have had a vast deal of rain here. It rained dreadfully hard for half an hour while we were at breakfast. I wanted them to put off the wedding."

"By the bye, I have not wished you joy. Being pretty well aware of what sort of joy you must both be feeling, I have been in no hurry with my congratulations; but I hope it all went off tolerably well. How did you all behave? Who cried most?"

"Ah! poor Miss Taylor! 'tis a sad business."

"Poor Mr. and Miss Woodhouse, if you please; but I cannot possibly say 'poor Miss Taylor.' I have a great regard for you and Emma; but when it comes to the question of dependence or independence!—at any rate, it must be better to have only one to please than two."

"Especially when *one* of those two is such a fanciful, troublesome creature!" said Emma playfully. "That is what you have in your head, I know—and what you would certainly say if my father were not by."

"I believe it is very true, my dear, indeed," said Mr. Woodhouse, with a sigh. "I am afraid I am sometimes very fanciful and troublesome."

"My dearest papa! You do not think I could mean *you*, or suppose Mr. Knightley to mean *you*. What a horrible idea! Oh, no! I meant only myself. Mr. Knightley loves to find fault with me, you know—in a joke—it is all a joke. We always say what we like to one another."

Mr. Knightley, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them ; and though this was not particularly agreeable to Emma herself, she knew it would be so much less so to her father, that she would not have him really suspect such a circumstance as her not being thought perfect by everybody.

"Emma knows I never flatter her," said Mr. Knightley, "but I meant no reflection on anybody. Miss Taylor has been used to have two persons to please ; she will now have but one. The chances are that she must be a gainer."

"Well," said Emma, willing to let it pass, "you want to hear about the wedding ; and I shall be happy to tell you, for we all behaved charmingly. Everybody was punctual, everybody in their best looks : not a tear, and hardly a long face to be seen. Oh, no ; we all felt that we were going to be only half a mile apart, and were sure of meeting every day."

"Dear Emma bears everything so well," said her father. But, Mr. Knightley, she is really very sorry to lose poor Miss Taylor, and I am sure she *will* miss her more than she thinks for."

Emma turned away her head, divided between tears and smiles.

"It is impossible that Emma should not miss such a companion," said Mr. Knightley. "We should not like her so well as we do, sir, if we could suppose it ; but she knows how much the marriage is to Miss Taylor's advantage ; she knows how very acceptable it must be, at Miss Taylor's time of life, to be settled in a home of her own, and how important to her to be secure of a comfortable provision, and therefore cannot allow herself to feel so much pain as pleasure."

Every friend of Miss Taylor must be glad to have her so happily married."

"And you have forgotten one matter of joy to me," said Emma, "and a very considerable one—that I made the match myself. I made the match, you know, four years ago; and to have it take place, and be proved in the right, when so many people said Mr. Weston would never marry again, may comfort me for anything."

Mr. Knightley shook his head at her. Her father fondly replied, "Ah! my dear, I wish you would not make matches and foretell things, for whatever you say always comes to pass. Pray do not make any more matches."

"I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world! And after such success, you know! Everybody said that Mr. Weston would never marry again. Oh dear, no! Mr. Weston, who had been a widower so long, and who seemed so perfectly comfortable without a wife, so constantly occupied either in his business in town or among his friends here, always acceptable wherever he went, always cheerful—Mr. Weston need not spend a single evening in the year alone if he did not like it. Oh no! Mr. Weston certainly would never marry again. Some people even talked of a promise to his wife on her deathbed, and others of the son and the uncle not letting him. All manner of solemn nonsense was talked on the subject, but I believed none of it. Ever since the day (about four years ago) that Miss Taylor and I met him in Broadway Lane, when, because it began to mizzle, he darted away with so much gallantry, and borrowed two umbrellas for us from Farmer Mitchell's, I made up my mind

on the subject. I planned the match from that hour ; and when such success has blessed me in this instance, dear papa, you cannot think that I shall leave off matchmaking."

" I do not understand what you mean by 'success,'" said Mr. Knightley. " Success supposes endeavour. Your time has been properly and delicately spent, if you have been endeavouring for the last four years to bring about this marriage. A worthy employment for a young lady's mind ! but if, which I rather imagine, your making the match, as you call it, means only your planning it, your saying to yourself one idle day, ' I think it would be a very good thing for Miss Taylor if Mr. Weston were to marry her,' and saying it again to yourself every now and then afterwards—why do you talk of success ? where is your merit ? What are you proud of ? You made a lucky guess ; and *that* is all that can be said."

" And have you never known the pleasure and triumph of a lucky guess ? I pity you. I thought you cleverer ; for, depend upon it, a lucky guess is never merely luck. There is always some talent in it. And as to my poor word ' success,' which you quarrel with, I do not know that I am so entirely without any claim to it. You have drawn two pretty pictures ; but I think there may be a third—a something between the do-nothing and the do-all. If I had not promoted Mr. Weston's visits here, and given many little encouragements, and smoothed many little matters, it might not have come to anything after all. I think you must know Hartfield enough to comprehend that."

" A straightforward, open-hearted man like Weston, and a rational, unaffected woman like Miss Taylor, may be safely left to manage their own concerns.

You are more likely to have done harm to yourself, than good to them, by interference."

"Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others," rejoined Mr. Woodhouse, understanding but in part. "But, my dear, pray do not make any more matches; they are silly things, and break up one's family circle grievously."

"Only one more, papa; only for Mr. Elton. Poor Mr. Elton! You like Mr. Elton, papa; I must look about for a wife for him. There is nobody in Highbury who deserves him—and he has been here a whole year, and has fitted up his house so comfortably, that it would be a shame to have him single any longer; and I thought when he was joining their hands to-day, he looked so very much as if he would like to have the same kind office done for him! I think very well of Mr. Elton, and this is the only way I have of doing him a service."

"Mr. Elton is a very pretty young man, to be sure, and a very good man, and I have a great regard for him. But if you want to show him any attention, my dear, ask him to come and dine with us some day. That will be a much better thing. I dare say Mr. Knightley will be so kind as to meet him."

"With a great deal of pleasure, sir, at any time," said Mr. Knightley laughing: "and I agree with you entirely, that it will be a much better thing. Invite him to dinner, Emma, and help him to the best of the fish and the chicken, but leave him to choose his own wife. Depend upon it, a man of six or seven-and-twenty can take care of himself."

The Ladies of Highbury

[The Highbury of this novel is a small Surrey town, with several strong resemblances to Leatherhead.]

Mr. Woodhouse was fond of society in his own way. He liked very much to have his friends come and see him ; and from various united causes, from his long residence at Hartfield, and his good nature, from his fortune, his house, and his daughter, he could command the visits of his own little circle, in a great measure, as he liked. He had not much intercourse with any families beyond that circle ; his horror of late hours, and large dinner-parties, made him unfit for any acquaintance but such as would visit him on his own terms. Fortunately for him, Highbury, including Randalls in the same parish, and Donwell Abbey in the parish adjoining, the seat of Mr. Knightley, comprehended many such. Not unfrequently, through Emma's persuasion, he had some of the chosen and the best to dine with him : but evening parties were what he preferred ; and, unless he fancied himself at any time unequal to company, there was scarcely an evening in the week in which Emma could not make up a card-table for him.

Real, long-standing regard brought the Westons and Mr. Knightley ; and by Mr. Elton, a young man living alone without liking it, the privilege of exchanging any vacant evening of his own blank solitude for the elegancies and society of Mr. Woodhouse's drawing-room, and the smiles of his lovely daughter, was in no danger of being thrown away.

After these came a second set : among the most come-at-able of whom were Mrs. and Miss Bates, and

Mrs. Goddard, three ladies almost always at the service of an invitation from Hartfield, and who were fetched and carried home so often, that Mr. Woodhouse thought it no hardship for either James or the horses. Had it taken place only once a year, it would have been a grievance.

Mrs. Bates, the widow of a former vicar of Highbury, was a very old lady, almost past anything but tea and quadrille. She lived with her single daughter in a very small way, and was considered with all the regard and respect which a harmless old lady, under such untoward circumstances, can excite. Her daughter enjoyed a most uncommon degree of popularity for a woman neither young, handsome, rich, nor married. Miss Bates stood in the very worst predicament in the world for having much of the public favour ; and she had no intellectual superiority to make atonement to herself, or frighten those who might hate her into outward respect. She had never boasted either beauty or cleverness. Her youth had passed without distinction, and her middle of life was devoted to the care of a failing mother, and the endeavour to make a small income go as far as possible. And yet she was a happy woman, and a woman whom no one named without good-will. It was her own universal good-will and contented temper which worked such wonders. She loved everybody, was interested in everybody's happiness, quicksighted to everybody's merits ; thought herself a most fortunate creature, and surrounded with blessings in such an excellent mother, and so many good neighbours and friends, and a home that wanted for nothing. The simplicity and cheerfulness of her nature, her contented and grateful spirit, were a recommendation to everybody, and a mine of felicity

to herself. She was a great talker upon little matters, which exactly suited Mr. Woodhouse, full of trivial communications and harmless gossip.

Mrs. Goddard was the mistress of a school—not of a seminary, or an establishment, or anything which professed, in long sentences of refined nonsense, to combine liberal acquirements with elegant morality, upon new principles and new systems—and where young ladies for enormous pay might be screwed out of health and into vanity—but a real, honest, old-fashioned boarding-school, where a reasonable quantity of accomplishments were sold at a reasonable price, and where girls might be sent to be out of the way, and scramble themselves into a little education, without any danger of coming back prodigies. Mrs. Goddard's school was in high repute,—and very deservedly ; for Highbury was reckoned a particularly healthy spot ; she had an ample house and garden, gave the children plenty of wholesome food, let them run about a great deal in the summer, and in winter dressed their chilblains with her own hands. It was no wonder that a train of twenty young couple now walked after her to church. She was a plain, motherly kind of woman, who had worked hard in her youth, and now thought herself entitled to the occasional holiday of a tea-visit ; and having formerly owed much to Mr. Woodhouse's kindness, felt his particular claim on her to leave her neat parlour, hung round with fancy work, whenever she could, and win or lose a few sixpences by his fireside.

These were the ladies whom Emma found herself very frequently able to collect ; and happy was she, for her father's sake, in the power ; though, as far as she was herself concerned, it was no remedy for the absence of Mrs. Weston. She was delighted to see

her father look comfortable, and very much pleased with herself for contriving things so well ; but the quiet prosings of three such women made her feel that every evening so spent was indeed one of the long evenings she had fearfully anticipated.

As she sat one morning, looking forward to exactly such a close of the present day, a note was brought from Mrs. Goddard requesting, in most respectful terms, to be allowed to bring Miss Smith with her : a most welcome request ; for Miss Smith was a girl of seventeen, whom Emma knew very well by sight, and had long felt an interest in, on account of her beauty. A very gracious invitation was returned, and the evening no longer dreaded by the fair mistress of the mansion.

Harriet Smith was the natural daughter of somebody. Somebody had placed her, several years back, at Mrs. Goddard's school, and somebody had lately raised her from the condition of scholar to that of parlour boarder. This was all that was generally known of her history. She had no visible friends, but what had been acquired at Highbury, and was now just returned from a long visit in the country to some young ladies who had been at school there with her.

She was a very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump, and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness ; and, before the end of the evening, Emma was as much pleased with her manners as her person, and quite determined to continue the acquaintance.

She was not struck by anything remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her

altogether very engaging—not inconveniently shy, not unwilling to talk—and yet so far from pushing, showing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of everything in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense, and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. Those soft blue eyes, and all those natural graces, should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connections. The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her. The friends from whom she had just parted, though very good sort of people, must be doing her harm. They were a family of the name of Martin, whom Emma well knew by character, as renting a large farm of Mr. Knightley, and residing in the parish of Donwell—very creditably, she believed ; she knew Mr. Knightley thought highly of them ; but they must be coarse and unpolished, and very unfit to be the intimates of a girl who wanted only a little more knowledge and elegance to be quite perfect. *She* would notice her ; she would improve her ; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society ; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking ; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers.

She was so busy in admiring those soft blue eyes in talking and listening, and forming all these schemes in the in-betweens, that the evening flew away at a very unusual rate ; and the supper-table, which always closed such parties, and for which she had been used to sit and watch the due time, was all set out and ready, and moved forwards to the fire, before

she was aware. With an alacrity beyond the common impulse of a spirit which yet was never indifferent to the credit of doing everything well and attentively, with the real good-will of a mind delighted with its own ideas, did she then do all the honours of the meal, and help and recommend the minced chicken and scalloped oysters, with an urgency which she knew would be acceptable to the early hours and civil scruples of their guests.

Upon such occasions poor Mr. Woodhouse's feelings were in sad warfare. He loved to have the cloth laid, because it had been the fashion of his youth, but his conviction of suppers being very unwholesome made him rather sorry to see anything put on it ; and while his hospitality would have welcomed his visitors to everything, his care for their health made him grieve that they would eat.

Such another small basin of thin gruel as his own was all that he could, with thorough self-approbation, recommend ; though he might constrain himself, while the ladies were comfortably clearing the nicer things, to say—

“ Mrs. Bates, let me propose your venturing on one of these eggs. An egg boiled very soft is not unwholesome. Serle understands boiling an egg better than anybody. I would not recommend an egg boiled by anybody else—but you need not be afraid, they are very small, you see—one of our small eggs will not hurt you. Miss Bates, let Emma help you to a *little* bit of tart—a *very* little bit. Ours are all apple-tarts. You need not be afraid of unwholesome preserves here. I do not advise the custard. Mrs. Goddard, what say you to *half* a glass of wine ? A *small* half-glass, put into a tumbler of water ? I do not think it could disagree with you.”

Emma allowed her father to talk—but supplied her visitors in a much more satisfactory style ; and on the present evening had particular pleasure in sending them away happy. The happiness of Miss Smith was quite equal to her intentions. Miss Woodhouse was so great a personage in Highbury, that the prospect of the introduction had given as much panic as pleasure ; but the humble, grateful little girl went off with highly gratified feelings, delighted with the affability with which Miss Woodhouse had treated her all the evening, and actually shaken hands with her at last !

A Charade

Mr. Knightley might quarrel with her, but Emma could not quarrel with herself. He was so much displeased, that it was longer than usual before he came to Hartfield again ; and when they did meet, his grave looks showed her that she was not forgiven. She was sorry, but could not repent. On the contrary, her plans and proceedings were more and more justified, and endeared to her by the general appearances of the next few days.

The Picture, elegantly framed, came safely to hand soon after Mr. Elton's return, and being hung over the mantelpiece of the common sitting-room, he got up to look at it, and sighed out his half sentences of admiration just as he ought ; and as for Harriet's feelings, they were visibly forming themselves into as strong and steady an attachment as her youth and sort of mind admitted. Emma was soon perfectly satisfied of Mr. Martin's being not otherwise remembered, than as he furnished a contrast with Mr. Elton, of the utmost advantage to the latter.

Her views of improving her little friend's mind, by a great deal of useful reading and conversation, had never yet led to more than a few first chapters, and the intention of going on to-morrow. It was much easier to chat than to study; much pleasanter to let her imagination range and work at Harriet's fortune, than to be labouring to enlarge her comprehension, or exercise it on sober facts; and the only literary pursuit which engaged Harriet at present, the only mental provision she was making for the evening of life, was the collecting and transcribing all the riddles of every sort that she could meet with, into a thin quarto of hot-pressed paper, made up by her friend, and ornamented with cyphers and trophies.

In this age of literature, such collections on a very grand scale are not uncommon. Miss Nash, head-teacher at Mrs. Goddard's, had written out at least three hundred; and Harriet, who had taken the first hint of it from her, hoped, with Miss Woodhouse's help, to get a great many more. Emma assisted with her invention, memory, and taste; and as Harriet wrote a very pretty hand, it was likely to be an arrangement of the first order, in form as well as quantity.

Mr. Woodhouse was almost as much interested in the business as the girls, and tried very often to recollect something worth their putting in. "So many clever riddles as there used to be when he was young—he wondered he could not remember them; but he hoped he should in time." And it always ended in "Kitty, a fair but frozen maid."

His good friend Perry, too, whom he had spoken to on the subject, did not at present recollect anything of the riddle kind; but he had desired Perry to be upon the watch, and as he went about so much,

something, he thought, might come from that quarter.

It was by no means his daughter's wish that the intellects of Highbury in general should be put under requisition. Mr. Elton was the only one whose assistance she asked. He was invited to contribute any really good enigmas, charades or conundrums, that he might recollect ; and she had the pleasure of seeing him most intently at work with his recollections ; and at the same time, as she could perceive, most earnestly careful that nothing ungallant, nothing that did not breathe a compliment to the sex, should pass his lips. They owed to him their two or three politest puzzles ; and the joy and exultation with which at last he recalled, and rather sentimentally recited, that well-known charade—

“ My first doth affliction denote,
Which my second is destin'd to feel
And my whole is the best antidote
That affliction to soften and heal—”

made her quite sorry to acknowledge that they had transcribed it some pages ago already.

“ Why will not you write one yourself for us, Mr. Elton ? ” said she ; “ that is the only security for its freshness ; and nothing could be easier to you.”

“ Oh, no ; he had never written, hardly ever, anything of the kind in his life. The stupidest fellow ! He was afraid not even Miss Woodhouse ” —he stopt a moment—“ or Miss Smith could inspire him.”

The very next day, however, produced some proof of inspiration. He called for a few moments, just to leave a piece of paper on the table containing, as he

said, a charade which a friend of his had addressed to a young lady, the object of his admiration ; but which, from his manner, Emma was immediately convinced must be his own.

“ I do not offer it for Miss Smith’s collection,” said he. “ Being my friend’s, I have no right to expose it in any degree to the public eye, but perhaps you may not dislike looking at it.”

The speech was more to Emma than to Harriet, which Emma could understand. There was deep consciousness about him, and he found it easier to meet her eye than her friend’s. He was gone the next moment :—after another moment’s pause—

“ Take it,”—said Emma, smiling and pushing the paper towards Harriet—“ it is for you. Take your own.”

But Harriet was in a tremor, and could not touch it ; and Emma, never loth to be first, was obliged to examine it herself.

To Miss—

CHARADE.

“ My first displays the wealth and pomp of kings,
Lords of the earth ! their luxury and ease.
Another view of man, my second brings,
Behold him there, the monarch of the seas !

“ But ah ! united, what reverse we have !
Man’s boasted power and freedom, all are flown :
Lord of the earth and sea, he bends a slave,
And woman, lovely woman, reigns alone.

“ Thy ready wit the word will soon supply,
May its approval beam in that soft eye ! ”

She cast her eye over it, pondered, caught the meaning, read it through again to be quite certain, and quite mistress of the lines, and then passing it to Harriet, sat happily smiling, and saying to herself, while Harriet was puzzling over the paper in all the confusion of hope and dullness, "Very well, Mr. Elton, very well, indeed. I have read worse charades. *Courtship*—a very good hint. I give you credit for it. This is feeling your way. This is saying very plainly—'Pray, Miss Smith, give me leave to pay my addresses to you. Approve my charade and my intentions in the same glance.'

May its approval beam in that soft eye!

Harriet exactly. Soft is the very word for her eye—of all epithets, the justest that could be given.

Thy ready wit the word will soon supply.

Humph—Harriet's ready wit! All the better. A man must be very much in love, indeed, to describe her so. Ah! Mr. Knightley, I wish you had the benefit of this; I think this would convince you. For once in your life you would be obliged to own yourself mistaken. An excellent charade, indeed, and very much to the purpose. Things must come to a crisis soon now."

She was obliged to break off from these very pleasant observations, which were otherwise of a sort to run into great length, by the eagerness of Harriet's wondering questions.

"What can it be, Miss Woodhouse?—what can it be? I have not an idea—I cannot guess it in the least. What can it possibly be? Do try to find it out, Miss Woodhouse. Do help me. I never saw anything so hard. Is it kingdom? I wonder who

the friend was—and who could be the young lady. Do you think it is a good one? Can it be woman?

And woman, lovely woman, reigns alone.

Can it be Neptune?

Behold him there, the monarch of the seas!

Or a trident? or a mermaid? or a shark? Oh, no; shark is only one syllable. It must be very clever, or he would not have brought it. Oh, Miss Woodhouse, do you think we shall ever find it out?"

"Mermaids and sharks! Nonsense! My dear Harriet, what are you thinking of? Where would be the use of his bringing us a charade made by a friend upon a mermaid or a shark? Give me the paper and listen.

"For 'Miss ——,' read 'Miss Smith.'

My first displays the wealth and pomp of kings,
Lords of the earth! their luxury and ease.

That is *court*.

Another view of man, my second brings;
Behold him there, the monarch of the seas!

That is *ship*—plain as it can be.—Now for the cream.

But ah! united (*courtship*, you know), what reverse
we have!

Man's boasted power and freedom, all are flown.
Lord of the earth and sea, he bends a slave,
And woman, lovely woman, reigns alone.

A very proper compliment!—and then follows the application which I think, my dear Harriet, you cannot find much difficulty in comprehending. Read

it in comfort to yourself. There can be no doubt of its being written for you and to you."

Harriet could not long resist so delightful a persuasion. She read the concluding lines, and was all flutter and happiness. She could not speak. But she was not wanted to speak. It was enough for her to feel. Emma spoke for her.

"There is so pointed and so particular a meaning in this compliment," said she, "that I cannot have a doubt as to Mr. Elton's intentions. You are his object—and you will soon receive the completest proof of it. I thought it must be so. I thought I could not be so deceived; but now it is clear: the state of his mind is as clear and decided as my wishes on the subject have been ever since I knew you. Yes, Harriet, just so long have I been wanting the very circumstance to happen which has happened. I could never tell whether an attachment between you and Mr. Elton were most desirable or most natural. Its probability and its eligibility have really so equalled each other! I am very happy. I congratulate you, my dear Harriet, with all my heart. This is an attachment which a woman may well feel pride in creating. This is a connection which offers nothing but good. It will give you everything that you want—consideration, independence, a proper home—it will fix you in the centre of all your real friends, close to Hartfield and to me, and confirm our intimacy for ever. This Harriet, is an alliance which can never raise a blush in either of us."

"Dear Miss Woodhouse!" and "Dear Miss Woodhouse!" was all that Harriet, with many tender embraces, could articulate at first; but when they did arrive at something more like conversation, it was sufficiently clear to her friend that she saw, felt,

anticipated, and remembered just as she ought. Mr. Elton's superiority had very ample acknowledgment.

"Whatever you say is always right," cried Harriet, "and therefore I suppose, and believe, and hope it must be so ; but otherwise I could not have imagined it. It is so much beyond anything I deserve. Mr. Elton, who might marry anybody ! There cannot be two opinions about *him*. He is so very superior. Only think of those sweet verses—' To Miss ——.' Dear me, how clever ! Could it really be meant for me ? "

"I cannot make a question, or listen to a question about that. It is a certainty. Receive it on my judgment. It is a sort of prologue to the play, a motto to the chapter ; and will soon be followed by matter-of-fact prose."

"It is a sort of thing which nobody could have expected. I am sure, a month ago, I had no more idea myself ! The strangest things do take place ! "

"When Miss Smiths and Mr. Eltons get acquainted—they do indeed—and really it is strange ; it is out of the common course that what is so evidently, so palpably desirable—what courts the pre-arrangement of other people—should so immediately shape itself into the proper form. You and Mr. Elton are by situation called together ; you belong to one another by every circumstance of your respective homes. Your marrying will be equal to the match at Randalls. There does seem to be a something in the air of Hartfield which gives love exactly the right direction, and sends it into the very channel where it ought to flow.

The course of true love never did run smooth.

A Hartfield edition of Shakespeare would have a long note on that passage."

"That Mr. Elton should really be in love with me—me, of all people, who did not know him, to speak to him, at Michaelmas. And he, the very handsomest man that ever was, and a man that everybody looks up to, quite like Mr. Knightley. His company so sought after, that everybody says he need not eat a single meal by himself if he does not choose it; that he has more invitations than there are days in the week. And so excellent in the Church! Miss Nash has put down all the texts he has ever preached from since he came to Highbury. Dear me! When I look back to the first time I saw him! How little did I think!—The two Abbots and I ran into the front room, and peeped through the blind when we heard he was going by, and Miss Nash came and scolded us away, and stayed to look through herself; however, she called me back presently, and let me look too, which was very good-natured. And how beautiful we thought he looked! He was arm-in-arm with Mr. Cole."

"This is an alliance which, whoever—whatever your friends may be, must be agreeable to them, provided, at least, they have common sense; and we are not to be addressing our conduct to fools. If they are anxious to see you *happily* married, here is a man whose amiable character gives every assurance of it: if they wish to have you settled in the same country and circle which they have chosen to place you in, here it will be accomplished; and if their only object is that you should, in the common phrase, be *well* married, here is the comfortable fortune, the respectable establishment, the rise in the world which must satisfy them."

"Yes, very true. How nicely you talk! I love to hear you. You understand everything. You and Mr. Elton are one as clever as the other. This charade! If I had studied a twelvemonth, I could never have made anything like it."

"I thought he meant to try his skill, by his manner of declining it yesterday."

"I do think it is, without exception, the best charade I ever read."

"I never read one more to the purpose, certainly."

"It is as long again as almost all we have had before."

"I do not consider its length as particularly in its favour. Such things in general cannot be too short."

Harriet was too intent on the lines to hear. The most satisfactory comparisons were rising in her mind,

"It is one thing," said she, presently, her cheeks in a glow, "to have very good sense in a common way, like everybody else, and if there is anything to say, to sit down and write a letter and say just what you must, in a short way; and another, to write verses and charades like this."

Emma could not have desired a more spirited rejection of Mr. Martin's prose.

"Such sweet lines!" continued Harriet, "these two last! But how shall I ever be able to return the paper, or say I have found it out? Oh, Miss Woodhouse, what can we do about that?"

"Leave it to me. You do nothing. He will be here this evening, I dare say, and then I will give it him back, and some nonsense or other will pass between us, and you shall not be committed. Your soft eyes shall choose their own time for beaming. Trust to me."

"Oh, Miss Woodhouse, what a pity that I must not

write this beautiful charade into my book ; I am sure I have not got one half so good."

"Leave out the two last lines, and there is no reason why you should not write it into your book."

"Oh, but those two lines are——"

"The best of all. Granted—for private enjoyment ; and for private enjoyment keep them. They are not at all the less written, you know, because you divide them. The couplet does not cease to be, nor does its meaning change. But take it away, and all *appropriation* ceases, and a very pretty gallant charade remains, fit for any collection. Depend upon it, he would not like to have his charade slighted much better than his passion. A poet in love must be encouraged in both capacities, or neither. Give me the book. I will write it down, and then there can be no possible reflection on you."

Harriet submitted, though her mind could hardly separate the parts, so as to feel quite sure that her friend were not writing down a declaration of love. It seemed too precious an offering for any degree of publicity.

"I shall never let that book go out of my own hands," said she.

"Very well," replied Emma, "a most natural feeling, and the longer it lasts, the better I shall be pleased. But here is my father coming ; you will not object to my reading the charade to him. It will be giving him so much pleasure. He loves anything of the sort, and especially anything that pays woman a compliment. He has the tenderest spirit of gallantry towards us all. You must let me read it to him."

Harriet looked grave.

"My dear Harriet, you must not refine too much

upon this charade. You will betray your feelings improperly, if you are too conscious and too quick, and appear to affix more meaning, or even quite all the meaning which may be affixed to it. Do not be overpowered by such a little tribute of admiration. If he had been anxious for secrecy, he would not have left the paper while I was by, and he rather pushed it towards me than towards you. Do not let us be too solemn on the business. He has encouragement enough to proceed, without our sighing out our souls over this charade."

"Oh no : I hope I shall not be ridiculous about it. Do as you please."

Mr. Woodhouse came in, and very soon led to the subject again, by the recurrence of his very frequent inquiry of "Well, my dears, how does your book go on? Have you got anything fresh?"

"Yes, papa; we have something to read you, something quite fresh. A piece of paper was found on the table this morning (dropt, we suppose, by a fairy), containing a very pretty charade, and we have just copied it in."

She read it to him, just as he liked to have anything read, slowly and distinctly, and two or three times over, with explanations of every part as she proceeded; and he was very much pleased, and, as she had foreseen, especially struck with the complimentary conclusion.

"Aye, that's very just, indeed; that's very properly said. Very true. 'Woman, lovely woman.' It is such a pretty charade, my dear, that I can easily guess what fairy brought it. Nobody could have written so prettily but you, Emma."

Emma only nodded and smiled. After a little thinking, and a very tender sigh, he added—

“ Ah, it is no difficulty to see who you take after. Your dear mother was so clever at all those things. If I had but her memory. But I can remember nothing ; not even that particular riddle which you have heard me mention ; I can only recollect the first stanza ; and there are several—

“ Kitty, a fair but frozen maid,
Kindled a flame I yet deplore ;
The hoodwink'd boy I called to aid,
Though of his near approach afraid,
So fatal to my suit before.”

And that is all that I can recollect of it ; but it is very clever all the way through. But I think, my dear, you said you had got it.”

“ Yes, papa, it is written out in our second page. We copied it from the *Elegant Extracts*. It was Garrick's, you know.”

“ Ay, very true—I wish I could recollect more of it—

Kitty, a fair but frozen maid.

The name makes me think of poor Isabella ; for she was very near being christened Catherine, after her grandmamma. I hope we shall have her here next week. Have you thought, my dear, where you shall put her, and what room there will be for the children ? ”

“ Oh, yes—she will have her own room, of course ; the room she always has ; and there is the nursery for the children—just as usual, you know. Why should there be any change ? ”

“ I do not know, my dear—but it is so long since she was here—not since last Easter, and then only for a few days. Mr. John Knightley's being a lawyer is

very inconvenient. Poor Isabella! she is sadly taken away from us all; and how sorry she will be, when she comes, not to see Miss Taylor here."

"She will not be surprised, papa, at least."

"I do not know, my dear. I am sure I was very much surprised when I first heard she was going to be married."

"We must ask Mr. and Mrs. Weston to dine with us, while Isabella is here."

"Yes, my dear, if there is time. But" (in a very depressed tone) "she is coming for only one week. There will not be time for anything."

"It is unfortunate that they cannot stay longer, but it seems a case of necessity. Mr. John Knightley must be in town again on the 28th; and we ought to be thankful, papa, that we are to have the whole of the time they can give to the country, that two or three days are not to be taken out for the Abbey. Mr. Knightley promises to give up his claim this Christmas, though you know it is longer since they were with him than with us."

"It would be very hard, indeed, my dear, if poor Isabella were to be anywhere but at Hartfield."

Mr. Woodhouse could never allow for Mr. Knightley's claims on his brother, or anybody's claims on Isabella, except his own. He sat musing a little while, and then said—

"But I do not see why poor Isabella should be obliged to go back so soon, though he does. I think, Emma, I shall try and persuade her to stay longer with us. She and the children might stay very well."

"Ah, papa, that is what you never have been able to accomplish, and I do not think you ever will. Isabella cannot bear to stay behind her husband."

This was too true for contradiction. Unwelcome

as it was, Mr. Woodhouse could only give a submissive sigh ; and as Emma saw his spirits affected by the idea of his daughter's attachment to her husband, she immediately led to such a branch of the subject as must raise them.

" Harriet must give us as much of her company as she can while my brother and sister are here. I am sure she will be pleased with the children. We are very proud of the children, are not we, papa ? I wonder which she will think the handsomest, Henry or John ? "

" Aye, I wonder which she will. Poor little dears, how glad they will be to come. They are very fond of being at Hartfield, Harriet."

" I dare say they are, sir. I am sure I do not know who is not."

" Henry is a fine boy, but John is very like his mamma. Henry is the eldest ; he was named after me, not after his father. John, the second, is named after his father. Some people are surprised, I believe, that the eldest was not, but Isabella would have him called Henry, which I thought very pretty of her. And he is a very clever boy, indeed. They are all remarkably clever ; and they have so many pretty ways. They will come and stand by my chair and say, ' Grandpapa, can you give me a bit of string ? ' and once Henry asked me for a knife, but I told him knives were only made for grandpapas. I think their father is too rough with them very often."

" He appears rough to you," said Emma, " because you are so very gentle yourself ; but if you could compare him with other papas, you would not think him rough. He wishes his boys to be active and hardy ; and if they misbehave, can give them a sharp word now and then ; but he is an affectionate father

—certainly Mr. John Knightley is an affectionate father. The children are all fond of him.”

“ And then their uncle comes in, and tosses them up to the ceiling in a very frightful way.”

“ But they like it, papa ; there is nothing they like so much. It is such enjoyment to them, that if their uncle did not lay down the rule of their taking turns, whichever began would never give way to the other.”

“ Well, I cannot understand it.”

“ That is the case with us all, papa. One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other.”

Later in the morning, and just as the girls were going to separate, in preparation for the regular four o'clock dinner, the hero of this inimitable charade walked in again. Harriet turned away ; but Emma could receive him with the usual smile, and her quick eye soon discovered in his the consciousness of having made a push—of having thrown a die ; and she imagined he was come to see how it might turn up. His ostensible reason, however, was to ask whether Mr. Woodhouse's party could be made up in the evening without him, or whether he should be in the smallest degree necessary at Hartfield. If he were, everything else must give way ; but otherwise his friend Cole had been saying so much about his dining with him—had made such a point of it—that he had promised him conditionally to come.

Emma thanked him, but could not allow of his disappointing his friend on their account ; her father was sure of his rubber. He re-urged—she re-declined, and he seemed then about to make his bow, when, taking the paper from the table, she returned it.

“ Oh, here is the charade you were so obliging as to leave with us ; thank you for the sight of it. We

admired it so much that I have ventured to write it into Miss Smith's collection. Your friend will not take it amiss, I hope. Of course, I have not transcribed beyond the first eight lines."

Mr. Elton certainly did not very well know what to say. He looked rather doubtfully—rather confused; said something about "honour,"—glanced at Emma and at Harriet, and then seeing the book open on the table, took it up, and examined it very attentively. With a view of passing off an awkward moment, Emma smilingly said—

"You must make my apologies to your friend; but so good a charade must not be confined to one or two. He may be sure of every woman's approbation while he writes with such gallantry."

"I have no hesitation in saying," replied Mr. Elton, though hesitating a good deal while he spoke—"I have no hesitation in saying—at least if my friend feels at all as *I* do—I have not the smallest doubt that, could he see his little effusion honoured as *I* see it (looking at the book again, and replacing it on the table), he would consider it as the proudest moment of his life."

After this speech he was gone as soon as possible. Emma could not think it too soon; for with all his good and agreeable qualities, there was a sort of parade in his speeches which was very apt to incline her to laugh. She ran away to indulge the inclination, leaving the tender and the sublime of pleasure to Harriet's share.

Emma's Sister and Brother-in-law

Mrs. John Knightley was a pretty, elegant little woman of gentle, quiet manners, and a disposition remarkably amiable and affectionate, wrapt up in her family, a devoted wife, a doating mother, and so tenderly attached to her father and sister that, but for these higher ties, a warmer love might have seemed impossible. She could never see a fault in any of them. She was not a woman of strong understanding or any quickness ; and with this resemblance of her father, she inherited also much of his constitution ; was delicate in her own health, over-careful of that of her children, had many fears and many nerves, and was as fond of her own Mr. Wingfield in town as her father could be of Mr. Perry. They were alike, too, in a general benevolence of temper, and a strong habit of regard for every old acquaintance.

Mr. John Knightley was a tall, gentleman-like, and very clever man, rising in his profession ; domestic, and respectable in his private character : but with reserved manners which prevented his being generally pleasing ; and capable of being sometimes out of humour. He was not an ill-tempered man, not so often unreasonably cross as to deserve such a reproach ; but his temper was not his great perfection ; and, indeed, with such a worshipping wife, it was hardly possible that any natural defects in it should not be increased. The extreme sweetness of her temper must hurt his. He had all the clearness and quickness of mind which she wanted ; and he could sometimes act an ungracious, or say a severe thing. He was

not a great favourite with his fair sister-in-law. Nothing wrong in him escaped her. She was quick in feeling the little injuries to Isabella, which Isabella never felt herself. Perhaps she might have passed over more had his manners been flattering to Isabella's sister, but they were only those of a calmly kind brother and friend, without praise and without blindness ; but hardly any degree of personal compliment could have made her regardless of that greatest fault of all in her eyes which he sometimes fell into, the want of respectful forbearance towards her father. There he had not always the patience that could have been wished. Mr. Woodhouse's peculiarities and fidgettiness were sometimes provoking him to a rational remonstrance or sharp retort equally ill bestowed. It did not often happen ; for Mr. John Knightley had really a great regard for his father-in-law, and generally a strong sense of what was due to him : but it was too often for Emma's charity, especially as there was all the pain of apprehension frequently to be endured, though the offence came not. The beginning, however, of every visit displayed none but the properest feelings, and this being of necessity so short might be hoped to pass away in unsullied cordiality. They had not been long seated and composed when Mr. Woodhouse, with a melancholy shake of the head and a sigh, called his daughter's attention to the sad change at Hartfield since she had been there last.

" Ah, my dear," said he, " poor Miss Taylor ! It is a grievous business."

" Oh yes, sir," cried she, with ready sympathy, " how you must miss her ! And dear Emma too. What a dreadful loss to you both ! I have been so grieved for you. I could not imagine how you could

possibly do without her. It is a sad change, indeed ; but I hope she is pretty well, sir."

" Pretty well, my dear—I hope—pretty well. I do not know but that the place agrees with her tolerably."

Mr. John Knightley here asked Emma, quietly, whether there were any doubts of the air of Randalls.

" Oh no : none in the least. I never saw Mrs. Weston better in my life—never looking so well. Papa is only speaking his own regret."

" Very much to the honour of both," was the handsome reply.

" And do you see her, sir, tolerably often ? " asked Isabella, in the plaintive tone which just suited her father.

Mr. Woodhouse hesitated. " Not near so often, my dear, as I could wish."

" Oh, papa, we have missed seeing them but one entire day since they married. Either in the morning or evening of every day, excepting one, have we seen either Mr. Weston or Mrs. Weston, and generally both, either at Randalls or here ; and as you may suppose, Isabella, most frequently here. They are very, very kind in their visits. Mr. Weston is really as kind as herself. Papa, if you speak in that melancholy way, you will be giving Isabella a false idea of us all. Everybody must be aware that Miss Taylor must be missed ; but everybody ought also to be assured that Mr. and Mrs. Weston do really prevent our missing her by any means to the extent we ourselves anticipated—which is the exact truth."

" Just as it should be," said Mr. John Knightley, " and just as I hoped it was from your letters. Her wish of showing you attention could not be doubted, and his being a disengaged and social man makes it all easy. I have been always telling you, my love,

that I had no idea of the change being so very material to Hartfield as you apprehended ; and now you have Emma's account, I hope you will be satisfied."

"Why, to be sure," said Mr. Woodhouse—"yes, certainly. I cannot deny that Mrs. Weston—poor Mrs. Weston—does come and see us pretty often ; but then, she is always obliged to go away again."

"It would be very hard upon Mr. Weston if she did not, papa. You quite forget poor Mr. Weston."

"I think, indeed," said John Knightley, pleasantly, "that Mr. Weston has some little claim. You and I, Emma, will venture to take the part of the poor husband. I being a husband, and you not being a wife, the claims of the man may very likely strike us with equal force. As for Isabella, she has been married long enough to see the convenience of putting all the Mr. Westons aside as much as she can."

"Me, my love?" cried his wife, hearing and understanding only in part. "Are you talking about me? I am sure nobody ought to be, or can be, a greater advocate for matrimony than I am ; and if it had not been for the misery of her leaving Hartfield, I should never have thought of Miss Taylor but as the most fortunate woman in the world ; and as to slighting Mr. Weston—that excellent Mr. Weston—I think there is nothing he does not deserve. I believe he is one of the very best-tempered men that ever existed. Excepting yourself and your brother, I do not know his equal for temper. I shall never forget his flying Henry's kite for him that very windy day last Easter ; and ever since his particular kindness last September twelvemonth in writing that note, at twelve o'clock at night, on purpose to assure me that there was no scarlet fever at Cobham, I have been convinced there could not be a more feeling

heart nor a better man in existence. If anybody can deserve him, it must be Miss Taylor."

"Where is the young man?" said John Knightley. "Has he been here on this occasion, or has he not?"

"He has not been here yet," replied Emma. "There was a strong expectation of his coming soon after the marriage, but it ended in nothing; and I have not heard him mentioned lately."

"But you should tell them of the letter, my dear," said her father. "He wrote a letter to poor Mrs. Weston, to congratulate her, and a very proper, handsome letter it was. She shewed it to me. I thought it very well done of him, indeed. Whether it was his own idea, you know, one cannot tell. He is but young, and his uncle, perhaps——"

"My dear papa, he is three-and-twenty. You forget how time passes."

"Three-and-twenty! is he, indeed? Well, I could not have thought it; and he was but two years old when he lost his poor mother. Well, time does fly, indeed! and my memory is very bad. However, it was an exceeding good, pretty letter, and gave Mr. and Mrs. Weston a great deal of pleasure. I remember it was written from Weymouth, and dated Sept. 28th, and began, 'My dear Madam,' but I forget how it went on; and it was signed, F. C. Weston Churchill.' I remember that perfectly."

"How very pleasing and proper of him!" cried the good-hearted Mrs. John Knightley. "I have no doubt of his being a most amiable young man. But how sad it is that he should not live at home with his father! There is something so shocking in a child's being taken away from his parents and natural home! I never could comprehend how Mr. Weston

could part with him. To give up one's child ! I really never could think well of anybody who proposed such a thing to anybody else."

"Nobody ever did think well of the Churchills, I fancy," observed Mr. John Knightley coolly. "But you need not imagine Mr. Weston to have felt what you would feel in giving up Henry or John. Mr. Weston is rather an easy, cheerful-tempered man, than a man of strong feelings : he takes things as he finds them, and makes enjoyment of them somehow or other, depending, I suspect, much more upon what is called *society* for his comforts, that is, upon the power of eating and drinking, and playing whist with his neighbours five times a week, than upon family affection, or anything that home affords."

Emma could not like what bordered on a reflection on Mr. Weston, and had half a mind to take it up ; but she struggled, and let it pass. She would keep the peace if possible ; and there was something honourable and valuable in the strong domestic habits, the all-sufficiency of home to himself, whence resulted her brother's disposition to look down on the common rate of social intercourse, and those to whom it was important. It had a high claim to forbearance.

The Valetudinarian

[*Mr. Woodhouse suggests that they should all have "a little gruel" and exhibits his general state of mind.*]

The brothers talked of their own concerns and pursuits, but principally of those of the elder, whose temper was by much the most communicative, and who was always the greater talker. As a magistrate, he had generally some point of law to consult John about, or, at least, some curious anecdote to give; and as a farmer, as keeping in hand the home-farm at Donwell, he had to tell what every field was to bear next year, and to give all such local information as could not fail of being interesting to a brother whose home it had equally been the longest part of his life, and whose attachments were strong. The plan of a drain, the change of a fence, the felling of a tree, and the destination of every acre for wheat, turnips, or spring corn, was entered into with as much equality of interest by John as his cooler manners rendered possible; and if his willing brother ever left him anything to inquire about, his inquiries even approached a tone of eagerness.

While they were thus comfortably occupied, Mr. Woodhouse was enjoying a full flow of happy regrets and fearful affection with his daughter.

"My poor dear Isabella," said he, fondly taking her hand, and interrupting, for a few moments, her busy labours for some one of her five children, "how long it is, how terribly long since you were here! And how tired you must be after your journey! You must go to bed early, my dear—and I recommend a little gruel to you before you go. You and I will

have a nice basin of gruel together. My dear Emma, suppose we all have a little gruel."

Emma could not suppose any such thing, knowing, as she did, that both the Mr. Knightleys were as unpersuadable on that article as herself, and two basins only were ordered. After a little more discourse in praise of gruel, with some wondering at its not being taken every evening by everybody, he proceeded to say, with an air of grave reflection—

"It was an awkward business, my dear, your spending the autumn at South End instead of coming here. I never had much opinion of the sea air."

"Mr. Wingfield most strenuously recommended it, sir, or we should not have gone. He recommended it for all the children, but particularly for the weakness in little Bella's throat—both sea air and bathing."

"Ah, my dear, but Perry had many doubts about the sea doing her any good; and as to myself, I have been long perfectly convinced, though perhaps I never told you so before, that the sea is very rarely of use to anybody. I am sure it almost killed me once."

"Come, come," cried Emma, feeling this to be an unsafe subject, "I must beg you not to talk of the sea. It makes me envious and miserable; I who have never seen it! South End is prohibited, if you please. My dear Isabella, I have not heard you make one inquiry about Mr. Perry yet; and he never forgets you."

"Oh, good Mr. Perry, how is he, sir?"

"Why, pretty well; but not quite well. Poor Perry is bilious, and he has not time to take care of himself; he tells me he has not time to take care of himself—which is very sad—but he is always wanted all round the country. I suppose there is not a man in such practice anywhere. But then there is not so clever a man anywhere."

“ And Mrs. Perry and the children, how are they ? Do the children grow ? I have a great regard for Mr. Perry. I hope he will be calling soon. He will be so pleased to see my little ones.”

“ I hope he will be here to-morrow, for I have a question or two to ask him about myself of some consequence. And, my dear, whenever he comes, you had better let him look at little Bella’s throat.”

“ Oh, my dear sir, her throat is so much better that I have hardly any uneasiness about it. Either bathing has been of the greatest service to her, or else it is to be attributed to an excellent embrocation of Mr. Wingfield’s, which we have been applying at times ever since August.”

“ It is not very likely, my dear, that bathing should have been of use to her ; and if I had known you were wanting an embrocation, I would have spoken to ——”

“ You seem to me to have forgotten Mrs. and Miss Bates,” said Emma ; “ I have not heard one inquiry after them.”

“ Oh ! the good Bateses. I am quite ashamed of myself, but you mention them in most of your letters. I hope they are quite well. Good old Mrs. Bates ! I will call upon her to-morrow, and take my children. They are always so pleased to see my children. And that excellent Miss Bates !—such thorough worthy people ! How are they, sir !”

“ Why, pretty well, my dear, upon the whole. But poor Mrs. Bates had a bad cold about a month ago.”

“ How sorry I am ! but colds were never so prevalent as they have been this autumn. Mr. Wingfield told me that he has never known them more general or heavy, except when it has been quite an influenza.”

“ That has been a good deal the case, my dear,

but not to the degree you mention. Perry says that colds have been very general, but not so heavy as he has very often known them in November. Perry does not call it altogether a sickly season."

"No, I do not know that Mr. Wingfield considers it *very* sickly, except——"

"Ah, my poor dear child, the truth is, that in London it is always a sickly season. Nobody is healthy in London—nobody can be. It is a dreadful thing to have you forced to live there;—so far off!—and the air so bad!"

"No, indeed, *we* are not at all in a bad air. Our part of London is very superior to most others. You must not confound us with London in general, my dear sir. The neighbourhood of Brunswick Square is very different from almost all the rest. We are so very airy! I should be unwilling, I own, to live in any other part of the town; there is hardly any other that I could be satisfied to have my children in: but *we* are so remarkably airy! Mr. Wingfield thinks the vicinity of Brunswick Square decidedly the most favourable as to air."

"Ah, my dear, it is not like Hartfield. You make the best of it—but after you have been a week at Hartfield, you are all of you different creatures; you do not look like the same. Now I cannot say that I think you are any of you looking well at present."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, sir; but I assure you, excepting those little nervous headaches and palpitations which I am never entirely free from anywhere, I am quite well myself; and if the children were rather pale before they went to bed, it was only because they were a little more tired than usual, from their journey and the happiness of coming. I hope you will think better of their looks to-morrow; for

I assure you Mr. Wingfield told me, that he did not believe he had ever sent us off altogether, in such good case. I trust, at least, that you do not think Mr. Knightley looking ill," turning her eyes with affectionate anxiety towards her husband.

"Middling, my dear; I cannot compliment you. I think Mr. John Knightley very far from looking well."

"What is the matter, sir? Did you speak to me?" cried Mr. John Knightley, hearing his own name.

"I am sorry to find, my love, that my father does not think you looking well; but I hope it is only from being a little fatigued. I could have wished, however, as you know, that you had seen Mr. Wingfield before you left home."

"My dear Isabella," exclaimed he, hastily, "pray do not concern yourself about my looks. Be satisfied with doctoring and coddling yourself and the children, and let me look as I choose."

"I did not thoroughly understand what you were telling your brother," cried Emma, "about your friend Mr. Graham's intending to have a bailiff from Scotland, to look after his new estate. But will it answer? Will not the old prejudice be too strong?"

And she talked in this way so long and successfully that, when forced to give her attention again to her father and sister, she had nothing worse to hear than Isabella's kind enquiry after Jane Fairfax; and Jane Fairfax, though no great favourite with her in general, she was, at that moment, very happy to assist in praising.

"That sweet, amiable Jane Fairfax!" said Mrs. John Knightley. "It is so long since I have seen her, except now and then for a moment accidentally in town. What happiness it must be to her good old

grandmother and excellent aunt, when she comes to visit them! I always regret excessively, on dear Emma's account, that she cannot be more at Highbury; but now their daughter is married, I suppose Colonel and Mrs. Campbell will not be able to part with her at all. She would be such a delightful companion for Emma."

Mr. Woodhouse agreed to it all, but added—

"Our little friend, Harriet Smith, however, is just such another pretty kind of young person. You will like Harriet. Emma could not have a better companion than Harriet."

"I am most happy to hear it; but only Jane Fairfax one knows to be so very accomplished and superior, and exactly Emma's age."

This topic was discussed very happily, and others succeeded of similar moment, and passed away with similar harmony; but the evening did not close without a little return of agitation. The gruel came, and supplied a great deal to be said—much praise and many comments—undoubting decision of its wholesomeness for every constitution, and pretty severe philippics upon the many houses where it was never met with tolerable; but, unfortunately, among the failures which the daughter had to instance, the most recent, and therefore most prominent, was in her own cook at South End, a young woman hired for the time, who never had been able to understand what she meant by a basin of nice smooth gruel, thin, but not too thin. Often as she had wished for and ordered it, she had never been able to get anything tolerable. Here was a dangerous opening.

"Ah," said Mr. Woodhouse, shaking his head, and fixing his eyes on her with tender concern. The ejaculation in Emma's ear expressed, "Ah, there is

no end of the sad consequences of your going to South End. It does not bear talking of." And for a little while she hoped he would not talk of it, and that a silent rumination might suffice to restore him to the relish of his own smooth gruel. After an interval of some minutes, however, he began with—

"I shall always be very sorry that you went to the sea this autumn, instead of coming here."

"But why should you be sorry, sir? I assure you, it did the children a great deal of good."

"And, moreover, if you must go to the sea, it had better not have been to South End. South End is an unhealthy place. Perry was surprised to hear you had fixed upon South End."

"I know there is such an idea with many people, but indeed it is quite a mistake, sir. We all had our health perfectly well there, never found the least inconvenience from the mud, and Mr. Wingfield says it is entirely a mistake to suppose the place unhealthy; and I am sure he may be depended on, for he thoroughly understands the nature of the air, and his own brother and family have been there repeatedly."

"You should have gone to Cromer, my dear, if you went anywhere. Perry was a week at Cromer once, and he holds it to be the best of all the sea-bathing places. A fine open sea, he says, and very pure air. And, by what I understand, you might have had lodgings there quite away from the sea—a quarter of a mile off—very comfortable. You should have consulted Perry."

"But, my dear sir, the difference of the journey; only consider how great it would have been. A hundred miles, perhaps, instead of forty."

"Ah, my dear, as Perry says, where health is at stake nothing else should be considered: and if one

is to travel, there is not much to choose between forty miles and an hundred. Better not move at all, better stay in London altogether, than travel forty miles to get into a worse air. This is just what Perry said. It seemed to him a very ill-judged measure."

Emma's attempts to stop her father had been vain ; and when he had reached such a point as this, she could not wonder at her brother-in-law's breaking out.

"Mr. Perry," said he, in a voice of very strong displeasure, "would do as well to keep his opinion till it is asked for. Why does he make it any business of his to wonder at what I do?—at my taking my family to one part of the coast or another? I may be allowed, I hope, the use of my judgment as well as Mr. Perry. I want his directions no more than his drugs." He paused, and growing cooler in a moment, added, with only sarcastic dryness, "If Mr. Perry can tell me how to convey a wife and five children a distance of an hundred and thirty miles with no greater expense or inconvenience than a distance of forty, I should be as willing to prefer Cromer to South End as he could himself."

"True, true," cried Mr. Knightley, with most ready interposition—"very true. That's a consideration, indeed. But, John, as to what I was telling you of my idea of moving the path to Langham, of turning it more to the right that it may not cut through the home meadows, I cannot conceive any difficulty. I should not attempt it, if it were to be the means of inconvenience to the Highbury people, but if you call to mind exactly the present line of the path—the only way of proving it, however, will be to turn to our maps. I shall see you at the Abbey to-morrow morning, I hope, and then we will look them over, and you shall give me your opinion."

Mr. Woodhouse was rather agitated by such harsh reflections on his friend Perry, to whom he had in fact, though unconsciously, been attributing many of his own feelings and expressions ; but the soothing attentions of his daughters gradually removed the present evil, and the immediate alertness of one brother, and better recollections of the other, prevented any renewal of it.

Miss Bates

[Emma calls on Mrs. and Miss Bates, and is received with floods of garrulity by the middle-aged daughter.]

Emma and Harriet had been walking together one morning, and, in Emma's opinion, had been talking enough of Mr. Elton for that day. She could not think that Harriet's solace or her own sins required more ; and she was therefore industriously getting rid of the subject as they returned, but it burst out again when she thought she had succeeded, and after speaking some time of what the poor must suffer in winter, and receiving no other answer than a very plaintive—"Mr. Elton is so good to the poor!" she found something else must be done.

They were just approaching the house where lived Mrs. and Miss Bates. She determined to call upon them, and seek safety in numbers. There was always sufficient reason for such an attention ; Mrs. and Miss Bates loved to be called on ; and she knew she was considered by the very few who presumed ever to see

imperfection in her, as rather negligent in that respect, and as not contributing what she ought to the stock of their scanty comforts.

She had had many a hint from Mr. Knightley and some from her own heart, as to her deficiency, but none were equal to counteract the persuasion of its being very disagreeable—a waste of time—tiresome women—and all the horror of being in danger of falling in with the second rate and third rate of Highbury, who were calling on them for ever, and therefore she seldom went near them. But now she made the sudden resolution of not passing their door without going in ; observing, as she proposed it to Harriet, that, as well as she could calculate, they were just now quite safe from any letter from Jane Fairfax.

The house belonged to people in business. Mrs. and Miss Bates occupied the drawing-room floor ; and there, in the very moderate-sized apartment, which was everything to them, the visitors were most cordially and even gratefully welcomed ; the quiet neat old lady, who with her knitting was seated in the warmest corner, wanting even to give up her place to Miss Woodhouse, and her more active, talking daughter almost ready to overpower them with care and kindness, thanks for their visit, solicitude for their shoes, anxious inquiries after Mr. Woodhouse's health, cheerful communications about her mother's, and sweet-cake from the beaufet :—" Mrs Cole had just been there, just called in for ten minutes, and had been so good as to sit an hour with them, and *she* had taken a piece of cake, and been so kind as to say she liked it very much ; and, therefore, she hoped Miss Woodhouse and Miss Smith would do them the favour to eat a piece too."

The mention of the Coles was sure to be followed by that of Mr. Elton. There was intimacy between them, and Mr. Cole had heard from Mr. Elton since his going away. Emma knew what was coming: they must have the letter over again, and settle how long he had been gone, and how much he was engaged in company, and what a favourite he was wherever he went, and how full the Master of the Ceremonies' ball had been; and she went through it very well, with all the interest and all the commendation that could be requisite, and always putting forward to prevent Harriet's being obliged to say a word.

This she had been prepared for when she entered the house; but meant, having once talked him handsomely over, to be no farther incommoded by any troublesome topic, and to wander at large amongst all the Mistresses and Misses of Highbury, and their card-parties. She had not been prepared to have Jane Fairfax succeed Mr. Elton; but he was actually hurried off by Miss Bates; she jumped away from him at last abruptly to the Coles, to usher in a letter from her niece.

"Oh yes—Mr. Elton, I understand—certainly as to dancing—Mrs. Cole was telling me that dancing at the rooms at Bath was—Mrs. Cole was so kind as to sit some time with us, talking of Jane; for as soon as she came in she began inquiring after her, Jane is so very great a favourite there. Wherever she is with us, Mrs. Cole does not know how to show her kindness enough; and I must say that Jane deserves it as much as anybody can. And so she began inquiring after her directly, saying, 'I know you cannot have heard from Jane lately, because it is not her time for writing'; and when I immediately said, 'But

indeed we have, we had a letter this very morning,' I do not know that I ever saw anybody more surprised. 'Have you, upon your honour?' said she; 'well, that is quite unexpected. Do let me hear what she says.'"

Emma's politeness was at hand directly, to say, with smiling interest—

" 'Have you heard from Miss Fairfax so lately? I am extremely happy. I hope she is well? "

'Thank you. You are so kind!' replied the happily deceived aunt, while eagerly hunting for the letter. "Oh, here it is. I was sure it could not be far off; but I had put my huswife upon it, you see, without being aware, and so it was quite hid; but I had it in my hand so very lately that I was almost sure it must be on the table. I was reading it to Mrs. Cole, and, since she went away, I was reading it again to my mother, for it is such a pleasure to her—a letter from Jane—that she can never hear it often enough; so I knew it could not be far off, and here it is, only just under my huswife—and since you are so kind as to wish to hear what she says—but, first of all, I really must, in justice to Jane, apologise for her writing so short a letter—only two pages, you see, hardly two, and in general she fills the whole paper and crosses half. My mother often wonders that I can make it out so well. She often says, when the letter is first opened, 'Well, Hetty, now I think you will be put to it to make out all that checker-work'—don't you, ma'am? And then I tell her, I am sure she would contrive to make it out herself, if she had nobody to do it for her, every word of it—I am sure she would pore over it till she had made out every word. And, indeed, though my mother's eyes are not so good as they were, she can see amazingly well

still, thank God ! with the help of spectacles. It is such a blessing ! My mother's are really very good indeed. Jane often says, when she is here, ' I am sure, grandmama, you must have had very strong eyes to see as you do, and so much fine work as you have done too ! I only wish my eyes may last me as well.'

All this, spoken extremely fast, obliged Miss Bates to stop for breath ; and Emma said something very civil about the excellence of Miss Fairfax's handwriting.

" You are extremely kind," replied Miss Bates, highly gratified ; " you, who are such a judge, and write so beautifully yourself. I am sure there is nobody's praise that could give us so much pleasure as Miss Woodhouse's. My mother does not hear ; she is a little deaf, you know. " Ma'am," addressing her, " do you hear what Miss Woodhouse is so obliging to say about Jane's handwriting ? "

And Emma had the advantage of hearing her own silly compliment repeated twice over before the good old lady could comprehend it. She was pondering, in the meanwhile, upon the possibility, without seeming very rude, of making her escape from Jane Fairfax's letter, and had almost resolved on hurrying away directly, under some slight excuse, when Miss Bates turned to her again and seized her attention.

" My mother's deafness is very trifling, you see, just nothing at all. By only raising my voice, and saying anything two or three times over, she is sure to hear ; but then she is used to my voice. But it is very remarkable that she should always hear Jane better than she does me. Jane speaks so distinct ! However, she will not find her grandmama at all

dearer than she was two years ago ; which is saying a great deal at my mother's time of life ; and it really is full two years, you know, since she was here. We never were so long without seeing her before ; and, as I was telling Mrs. Cole, we shall hardly know how to make enough of her now."

"Are you expecting Miss Fairfax here soon ?"

"Oh, yes ; next week."

"Indeed ! that must be a very great pleasure."

"Thank you. You are very kind. Yes, next week. Everybody is so surprised ; and everybody says the same obliging things. I am sure she will be as happy to see her friends at Highbury as they can be to see her. Yes, Friday or Saturday ; she cannot say which, because Colonel Campbell will be wanting the carriage himself one of those days. So very good of them to send her the whole way ! But they always do, you know. Oh, yes, Friday or Saturday next. That is what she writes about. That is the reason of her writing out of rule, as we call it ; for, in the common course, we should not have heard from her before next Tuesday or Wednesday."

"Yes, so I imagined. I was afraid there could be little chance of my hearing anything of Miss Fairfax to-day."

"So obliging of you ! No, we should not have heard, if it had not been for this particular circumstance, of her being to come here so soon. My mother is so delighted ! for she is to be three months with us at least. Three months, she says so, positively, as I am going to have the pleasure of reading to you. The case is, you see, that the Campbells are going to Ireland. Mrs. Dixon has persuaded her father and mother to come over and see her directly. They had not intended to go over till the summer, but she

is so impatient to see them again ;—for till she married, last October, she was never away from them so much as a week, which must make it very strange to be in different kingdoms, I was going to say, but, however, different countries, and so she wrote a very urgent letter to her mother, or her father—I declare I do not know which it was, but we shall see presently in Jane's letter—wrote in Mr. Dixon's name as well as her own, to press their coming over directly ; and they would give them the meeting in Dublin, and take them back to their country-seat, Bally-craig—a beautiful place, I fancy. Jane has heard a great deal of its beauty—from Mr. Dixon, I mean—I do not know that she ever heard about it from anybody else—but it was very natural, you know, that he should like to speak of his own place while he was paying his addresses—and as Jane used to be very often walking out with them—for Colonel and Mrs. Campbell were very particular about their daughter's not walking out often with only Mr. Dixon, for which I do not at all blame them ; of course she heard everything he might be telling Miss Campbell about his own home in Ireland ; and I think she wrote us word that he had shown them some drawings of the place, views that he had taken himself. He is a most amiable, charming young man, I believe. Jane was quite longing to go to Ireland, from his account of things."

At this moment, an ingenious and animating suspicion entering Emma's brain with regard to Jane Fairfax, this charming Mr. Dixon, and the not going to Ireland, she said, with the insidious design of further discovery—

" You must feel it very fortunate that Miss Fairfax should be allowed to come to you at such a time. Considering the very particular friendship between

her and Mrs. Dixon, you could hardly have expected her to be excused from accompanying Colonel and Mrs. Campbell."

"Very true, very true, indeed. The very thing that we have always been rather afraid of; for we should not have liked to have her at such a distance from us, for months together,—not able to come if anything was to happen; but you see everything turns out for the best. They want her (Mr. and Mrs. Dixon) excessively to come over with Colonel and Mrs. Campbell; quite depend upon it; nothing can be more kind or pressing than their *joint* invitation Jane says, as you will hear presently. Mr. Dixon does not seem in the least backward in any attention. He is a most charming young man. Ever since the service he rendered Jane at Weymouth, when they were out in that party on the water, and she, by the sudden whirling round of something or other among the sails, would have been dashed into the sea at once, and actually was all but gone, if he had not with the greatest presence of mind, caught hold of her habit,—I can never think of it without trembling!—but ever since we had the history of that day, I have been so fond of Mr. Dixon!"

"But, in spite of all her friends' urgency, and her own wish of seeing Ireland, Miss Fairfax prefers devoting the time to you and Mrs. Bates?"

"Yes—entirely her own doing, entirely her own choice; and Colonel and Mrs. Campbell think she does quite right, just what they should recommend; and indeed they particularly *wish* her to try her native air, as she has not been quite so well as usual lately."

"I am concerned to hear of it. I think they judge wisely; but Mrs. Dixon must be very much disappointed. Mrs. Dixon, I understand, has no

remarkable degree of personal beauty—is not, by any means, to be compared with Miss Fairfax ? ”

“ Oh, no. You are very obliging to say such things, but certainly not ; there is no comparison between them. Miss Campbell always was absolutely plain, but extremely elegant and amiable.”

“ Yes, that of course.”

“ Jane caught a bad cold, poor thing ! so long ago as the 7th of November (as I am going to read to you), and has never been well since. A long time, is it not, for a cold to hang upon her ? She never mentioned it before, because she would not alarm us. Just like her ! so considerate ! But, however, she is so far from well, that her kind friends the Campbells think she had better come home, and try an air that always agrees with her : and they have no doubt that three or four months at Highbury will entirely cure her ; and it is certainly a great deal better that she should come here than go to Ireland, if she is unwell. Nobody could nurse her as we should do.”

“ It appears to me the most desirable arrangement in the world.”

“ And so she is to come to us next Friday or Saturday, and the Campbells leave town in their way to Holyhead the Monday following, as you will find from Jane’s letter. So sudden ! You may guess, dear Miss Woodhouse, what a flurry it has thrown me in. If it was not for the drawback of her illness—but I am afraid we must expect to see her grown thin, and looking very poorly. I must tell you what an unlucky thing happened to me as to that. I always make a point of reading Jane’s letters through to myself first, before I read them aloud to my mother, you know, for fear of there being anything in them to distress her. Jane desired me to do it, so I always do !

and so I began to-day with my usual caution : but no sooner did I come to the mention of her being unwell, then I burst out, quite frightened, with ' Bless me ! poor Jane is ill ! ' which my mother, being on the watch, heard distinctly, and was sadly alarmed at. However, when I read on, I found it was not near so bad as I had fancied at first ; and I make so light of it now to her that she does not think much about it : but I cannot imagine how I could be so off my guard. If Jane does not get well soon, we will call in Mr. Perry. The expense shall not be thought of ; and though he is so liberal and so fond of Jane, that I daresay he would not mean to charge anything for attendance, we could not suffer it to be so, you know. He has a wife and family to maintain, and is not to be giving away his time. Well, now I have just given you a hint of what Jane writes about, we will turn to her letter, and I am sure she tells her own story a great deal better than I can tell it for her."

" I am afraid we must be running away," said Emma, glancing at Harriet, and beginning to rise, " my father will be expecting us. I had no intention, I thought I had no power, of staying more than five minutes, when I first entered the house. I merely called because I would not pass the door without inquiring after Mrs. Bates ; but I have been so pleasantly detained. Now, however, we must wish you and Mrs. Bates good morning."

And not all that could be urged to detain her succeeded. She regained the street, happy in this, that though much had been forced on her against her will ; though she had, in fact, heard the whole substance of Jane Fairfax's letter, she had been able to escape the letter itself.

A Morning in Highbury

Emma did not repent her condescension in going to the Coles. The visit afforded her many pleasant recollections the next day, and all that she might be supposed to have lost on the side of dignified seclusion must be amply repaid in the splendour of popularity. She must have delighted the Coles—worthy people ; who deserved to be made happy !—and left a name behind her that would not soon die away.

Perfect happiness, even in memory, is not common ; and there were two points on which she was not quite easy. She doubted whether she had not transgressed the duty of woman by woman, in betraying her suspicions of Jane Fairfax to Frank Churchill. It was hardly right ; but it had been so strong an idea that it would escape her, and his submission to all that she told was a compliment to her penetration, which made it difficult for her to be quite certain that she ought to have held her tongue.

The other circumstance of regret related also to Jane Fairfax, and there she had no doubt. She did unfeignedly and unequivocally regret the inferiority of her own playing and singing. She did most heartily grieve over the idleness of her childhood, and sat down and practised vigorously an hour and a half.

She was then interrupted by Harriet's coming in ; and if Harriet's praise could have satisfied her, she might soon have been comforted.

" Oh, if I could but play as well as you and Miss Fairfax ! "

" Don't class us together, Harriet. My playing is no more like hers than a lamp is like sunshine. "

"O dear, I think you play the best of the two. I think you play quite as well as she does. I am sure I had much rather hear you. Everybody last night said how well you played."

"Those who knew anything about it must have felt the difference. The truth is, Harriet, that my playing is just good enough to be praised, but Jane Fairfax's is much beyond it."

"Well, I always shall think that you play quite as well as she does, or that if there is any difference nobody would ever find it out. Mr. Cole said how much taste you had, and Mr. Frank Churchill talked a great deal about your taste, and that he valued taste much more than execution."

"Ah, but Jane Fairfax has them both, Harriet."

"Are you sure? I saw she had execution, but I did not know she had any taste. Nobody talked about it; and I hate Italian singing, there is no understanding a word of it. Besides, if she does play so very well, you know, it is no more than she is obliged to do, because she will have to teach. The Coxes were wondering last night whether she would get into any great family. How did you think the Coxes looked?"

"Just as they always do—very vulgar."

"They told me something," said Harriet, rather hesitatingly, "but it is nothing of any consequence."

Emma was obliged to ask what they had told her, though fearful of its producing Mr. Elton.

"They told me that Mr. Martin dined with them last Saturday."

"Oh!"

"He came to their father upon some business, and he asked him to stay to dinner."

"Oh!"

“ They talked a great deal about him, especially Anne Cox. I do not know what she meant, but she asked me if I thought I should go and stay there again next summer.”

“ She meant to be impertinently curious, just as such as Anne Cox should be.”

“ She said he was very agreeable the day he dined there. He sat by her at dinner. Miss Nash thinks either of the Coxes would be very glad to marry him.”

“ Very likely : I think they are, without exception, the most vulgar girls in Highbury.”

Harriet had business at Ford's. Emma thought it most prudent to go with her. Another accidental meeting with the Martins was possible, and in her present state, would be dangerous.

Harriet, tempted by everything, and swayed by half a word, was always very long at a purchase ; and while she was still hanging over muslins and changing her mind Emma went to the door for amusement. Much could not be hoped from the traffic of even the busiest part of Highbury :—Mr. Perry walking hastily by ; Mr. William Cox letting himself in at the office-door ; Mr. Cole's carriage horses returning from exercise ; or a stray letter-boy on an obstinate mule, were the liveliest objects she could presume to expect ; and when her eyes fell only on the butcher with his tray, a tidy old woman travelling homewards from shop with her full basket, two curs quarrelling over a dirty bone, and a string of dawdling children round the baker's little bow-window eyeing the gingerbread, she knew she had no reason to complain, and was amused enough ; quite enough still to stand at the door. A mind lively and at ease can do with seeing nothing, and can see nothing that does not answer.

She looked down the Randalls road. The scene enlarged :—two persons appeared : Mrs. Weston and her son-in-law. They were walking into Highbury ; —to Hartfield of course ; they were stopping, however, in the first place at Mrs. Bates's, whose house was a little nearer Randalls than Ford's, and had all but knocked when Emma caught their eye. Immediately they crossed the road and came forward to her ; and the agreeableness of yesterday's engagement seemed to give fresh pleasure to the present meeting. Mrs. Weston informed her that she was going to call on the Bateses, in order to hear the new instrument.

"For my companion tells me," said she, "that I absolutely promised Miss Bates last night that I would come this morning. I was not aware of it myself. I did not know that I had fixed a day ; but as he says I did I am going now."

"And while Mrs. Weston pays her visit, I may be allowed, I hope," said Frank Churchill, "to join your party and wait for her at Hartfield, if you are going home."

Mrs. Weston was disappointed.

"I thought you meant to go with me. They would be very much pleased."

"Me ! I should be quite in the way. But, perhaps, I may be equally in the way here. Miss Woodhouse looks as if she did not want me. My aunt always sends me off when she is shopping. She says I fidget her to death ; and Miss Woodhouse looks as if she could almost say the same. What am I to do ?"

"I am here on no business of my own," said Emma, "I am only waiting for my friend. She will probably have soon done, and then we shall go home. But

you had better go with Mrs. Weston and hear the instrument."

"Well, if you advise it. But" (with a smile) "if Colonel Campbell should have employed a careless friend, and if it should prove to have an indifferent tone, what shall I say? I shall be no support to Mrs. Weston. She might do very well by herself. A disagreeable truth, would be palatable through her lips, but I am the wretchedest being in the world at a civil falsehood."

"I do not believe any such thing," replied Emma; "I am persuaded that you can be as insincere as your neighbours, when it is necessary; but there is no reason to suppose the instrument is indifferent. Quite otherwise, indeed, if I understood Miss Fairfax's opinion last night."

"Do come with me," said Mrs. Weston, "if it be not very disagreeable to you. It need not detain us long. We will go to Hartfield afterwards. We will follow them to Hartfield. I really wish you to call with me: it will be felt so great an attention—and I always thought you meant it."

He could say no more; and, with the hope of Hartfield to reward him, returned with Mrs. Weston to Mrs. Bates's door. Emma watched them in, and then joined Harriet at the interesting counter, trying, with all the force of her own mind, to convince her that if she wanted plain muslin, it was of no use to look at figured: and that a blue ribbon, be it ever so beautiful, would still never match her yellow pattern. At last it was all settled, even to the destination of the parcel.

"Should I send it to Mrs. Goddard's ma'am?" asked Mrs. Ford.—"Yes—no—yes, to Mrs. Goddard's. Only my pattern gown is at Hartfield. No, you shall

send it to Hartfield, if you please. But then Mrs. Goddard will want to see it. And I could take the pattern gown home any day. But I shall want the ribbon directly ; so it had better go to Hartfield—at least the ribbon. You could make it into two parcels, Mrs. Ford, could you not ? ”

“ It is not worth while, Harriet, to give Mrs. Ford the trouble of two parcels.”

“ No more it is.”

“ No trouble in the world, ma’am,” said the obliging Mrs. Ford.

“ Oh, but indeed I would much rather have it only in one. Then, if you please, you shall send it all to Mrs. Goddard’s—I do not know—no, I think, Miss Woodhouse, I may just as well have it sent to Hartfield, and take it home with me at night.—What do you advise ? ”

“ That you do not give another half-second to the subject. To Hartfield, if you please, Mrs. Ford.”

“ Aye, that will be much best,” said Harriet, quite satisfied ; “ I should not at all like to have it sent to Mrs. Goddard’s.”

Voices approached the shop, or rather, one voice and two ladies ; Mrs. Weston and Miss Bates met them at the door.

“ My dear Miss Woodhouse,” said the latter, “ I am just run across to entreat the favour of you to come and sit down with us a little while, and give us your opinion of our new instrument—you and Miss Smith. How do you do, Miss Smith ?—Very well, I thank you.—And I begged Mrs. Weston to come with me, that I might be sure of succeeding.”

“ I hope Mrs. Bates and Miss Fairfax are——”

“ Very well, I am much obliged to you. My mother is delightfully well ; and Jane caught no cold

last night. How is Mr. Woodhouse? I am glad to hear such a good account. Mrs. Weston told me you were here. 'Oh, then,' said I, 'I must run across; I am sure Miss Woodhouse will allow me just to run across and entreat her to come in: my mother will be so very happy to see her; and now we are such a nice party, she cannot refuse.' 'Ay, pray do,' said Mr. Frank Churchill, 'Miss Woodhouse's opinion of the instrument will be worth having.' 'But,' said I, 'I shall be more sure of succeeding if one of you will go with me.'—'Oh,' said he, 'wait half a minute, till I have finished my job'; for, would you believe it, Miss Woodhouse, there he is, in the most obliging manner in the world, fastening in the rivet of my mother's spectacles. The rivet came out, you know, this morning; so very obliging!—For my mother had no use of her spectacles—could not put them on, and, by-the-bye, everybody ought to have two pair of spectacles; they should indeed. Jane said so. I meant to take them over to John Saunders the first thing I did, but something or other hindered me all the morning; first one thing, then another, there is no saying what: you know. At one time Patty came to say she thought the kitchen chimney wanted sweeping. 'Oh,' said I, 'Patty, do not come with your bad news to me. Here is the rivet of your mistress's spectacles out.' Then the baked apples came home; Mrs. Wallis sent them by her boy; they are extremely civil and obliging to us, the Wallises, always. I have heard some people say that Mrs. Wallis can be uncivil and give a very rude answer, but we have never known anything but the greatest attention from them. And it cannot be for the value of our custom now, for what is our consumption of bread you know? only three of us. Besides, dear

Jane at present—and she really eats nothing—makes such a shocking breakfast, you would be quite frightened if you saw it. I dare not let my mother know how little she eats; so I say one thing, and then I say another, and it passes off. But about the middle of the day she gets hungry, and there is nothing she likes so well as these baked apples, and they are extremely wholesome; for I took the opportunity the other day of asking Mr. Perry; I happened to meet him in the street. Not that I had any doubt before. I have so often heard Mr. Woodhouse recommend a baked apple. I believe it is the only way that Mr. Woodhouse thinks the fruit thoroughly wholesome. We have apple dumplings, however, very often. Patty makes an excellent apple-dumpling. Well, Mrs. Weston, you have prevailed, I hope, and these ladies will oblige us.”

Emma would be “very happy to wait on Mrs. Bates,” &c., and they did at last move out of the shop, with no further delay from Miss Bates than—

“How do you do, Mrs. Ford? I beg your pardon; I did not see you before. I hear you have a charming collection of new ribbons from town. Jane came back delighted yesterday. Thank ye, the gloves do very well—only a little too large about the wrist; but Jane is taking them in.”

“What was I talking of?” said she, beginning again when they were all in the street.

Emma wondered on what, of all the medley, she would fix.

“I declare I cannot recollect what I was talking of. Oh, my mother’s spectacles! So very obliging of Mr. Frank Churchill! ‘Oh!’ said he, ‘I do think I can fasten the rivet; I like a job of this kind excessively.’ Which, you know, showed him to be

so very—Indeed I must say that, much as I had heard of him before, and much as I had expected, he very far exceeds anything—I do congratulate you, Mrs. Weston, most warmly. He seems everything the fondest parent could—‘Oh!’ said he, ‘I can fasten the rivet. I like a job of that sort excessively.’ I never shall forget his manner. And when I brought out the baked apples from the closet, and hoped our friends would be so very obliging as to take some, ‘Oh!’ said he, directly, ‘there is nothing in the way of fruit half so good, and these are the finest-looking home-baked apples I ever saw in my life.’ That, you know, was so very—And I am sure, by his manner, it was no compliment. Indeed they are very delightful apples, and Mrs. Wallis does them full justice, only we do not have them baked more than twice, and Mr. Woodhouse made us promise to have them done three times; but Miss Woodhouse will be so good as not to mention it. The apples themselves are the very finest sort for baking, beyond a doubt; all from Donwell—some of Mr. Knightley’s most liberal supply. He sends us a sack every year; and certainly there never was such a keeping apple anywhere as one of his trees—I believe there is two of them. My mother says the orchard was always famous in her younger days. But I was really quite shocked the other day; for Mr. Knightley called one morning, and Jane was eating these apples, and we talked about them, and said how much she enjoyed them, and he asked whether we were not got to the end of our stock. ‘I am sure you must be,’ said he, ‘and I will send you another supply; for I have a great many more than I can ever use. William Larkins let me keep a larger quantity than usual this year. I will send you some more, before they get

good for nothing.' So I begged he would not—for really as to ours being gone, I could not absolutely say that we had a great many left—it was but half-a-dozen indeed ; but they should be all kept for Jane ; and I could not at all bear that he should be sending us more, so liberal as he had been already ; and Jane said the same. And when he was gone she almost quarrelled with me—no, I should not say quarrelled, for we never had a quarrel in our lives—but she was quite distressed that I had owned the apples were so nearly gone ; she wished I had made him believe we had a great many left. ' Oh,' said I, ' my dear, I did say as much as I could.' However, the very same evening William Larkins came over with a large basket of apples, the same sort of apples, a bushel at least, and I was very much obliged, and went down and spoke to William Larkins, and said everything, as you may suppose. William Larkins is such an old acquaintance ! I am always glad to see him. But however, I found afterwards from Patty that William said it was all the apples of *that* sort his master had ; he had brought them all—and now his master had not one left to bake or boil. William did not seem to mind it himself, he was so pleased to think his master had sold so many ; for William, you know, thinks more of his master's profit than anything ; but Mrs. Hodges, he said, was quite displeased at their being all sent away. She could not bear that her master should not be able to have another apple-tart this spring. He told Patty this, but bid her not mind it, and be sure not to say anything to us about it, for Mrs. Hodges *would* be cross sometimes and as long as so many sacks were sold it did not signify who ate the remainder. And so Patty told me, and I was excessively shocked indeed ! I would not have

Mr. Knightley know anything about it for the world! He would be so very—I wanted to keep it from Jane's knowledge; but, unluckily, I had mentioned it before I was aware."

Miss Bates had just done as Patty opened the door; and her visitors walked upstairs, without having any regular narration to attend to, pursued only by the sounds of her desultory good-will.

"Pray, take care, Mrs. Weston, there is a step at the turning. Pray, take care, Miss Woodhouse, ours is rather a dark staircase—rather darker and narrower than one could wish. Miss Smith, pray take care. Miss Woodhouse, I am quite concerned, I am sure you hit your foot. Miss Smith, the step at the turning."

Mrs. Elton

[*The Vicar, whom Emma had chosen as a husband for her protégée Harriet, brings home a bride from elsewhere.*]

Mrs. Elton was first seen at church: but though devotion might be interrupted, curiosity could not be satisfied by a bride in a pew, and it must be left for the visits in form which were then to be paid, to settle whether she were very pretty indeed, or only rather pretty, or not pretty at all.

Emma had feelings, less of curiosity, than of pride or propriety, to make her resolve on not being the last to pay her respects: and she made a point of Harriet's going with her, that the worst of the business might be gone through as soon as possible.

She could not enter the house again, could not be in the same room to which she had with such vain artifice retreated three months ago, to lace up her

boot, without *recollecting*. A thousand vexatious thoughts would recur. Compliments, charades, and horrible blunders; and it was not to be supposed that poor Harriet should not be recollecting too; but she behaved very well, and was only rather pale and silent. The visit was of course short! and there was so much embarrassment and occupation of mind to shorten it that Emma would not allow herself entirely to form an opinion of the lady, and on no account to give one, beyond the nothing-meaning term of being “elegantly dressed, and very pleasing.”

She did not really like her. She would not be in a hurry to find fault, but she suspected that there was no elegance;—ease, but not elegance. She was almost sure that for a young woman, a stranger, a bride, there was too much ease. Her person was rather good; her face not unpretty; but neither feature nor air, nor voice, nor manner were elegant. Emma thought, at least, it would turn out so.

As for Mr. Elton, his manners did not appear—but no, she would not permit a hasty or a witty word from herself about his manners. It was an awkward ceremony at any time to be receiving wedding visits; and a man had need be all grace to acquit himself well through it. The woman was better off; she might have the assistance of fine clothes, and the privilege of bashfulness; but the man had only his own good sense to depend on: and when she considered how peculiarly unlucky Mr. Elton was in being in the same room at once with the woman he had just married, the woman he had wanted to marry, and the woman whom he had been expected to marry, she must allow him to have the right to look as little wise, and to be as much affectedly, and as little really, easy as could be.

“ Well, Miss Woodhouse,” said Harriet, when they had quitted the house, and after waiting in vain for her friend to begin ; “ well, Miss Woodhouse ” (with a gentle sign), “ what do you think of her ? Is not she very charming ? ”

There was a little hesitation in Emma’s answer.

“ Oh ! yes—very—a very pleasing young woman.”

“ I think her beautiful, quite beautiful.”

“ Very nicely dressed, indeed ; a remarkably elegant gown.”

“ I am not at all surprised that he should have fallen in love.”

“ Oh ! no ; there is nothing to surprise one at all ; a pretty fortune, and she came in his way.”

“ I dare say,” returned Harriet, sighing again, “ I dare say she was very much attached to him.”

“ Perhaps she might ; but it is not every man’s fate to marry the woman who loves him best. Miss Hawkins, perhaps, wanted a home, and thought this the best offer she was likely to have.”

“ Yes,” said Harriet, earnestly, “ and well she might ; nobody could ever have a better. Well, I wish them happy with all my heart. And now, Miss Woodhouse, I do not think I shall mind seeing them again. He is just as superior as ever ; but being married, you know, it is quite a different thing. No, indeed, Miss Woodhouse, you need not be afraid ; I can sit and admire him now without any great misery. To know that he has not thrown himself away is such a comfort ! She does seem a charming young woman, just what he deserves. Happy creature ! He called her ‘ Augusta.’ How delightful ! ”

When the visit was returned Emma made up her mind. She could then see more and judge better.

From Harriet's happening not to be at Hartfield, and her father's being present to engage Mr. Elton, she had a quarter of an hour of the lady's conversation to herself, and could composedly attend to her; and the quarter of an hour quite convinced her that Mrs. Elton was a vain woman, extremely well satisfied with herself, and thinking much of her own importance; that she meant to shine and be very superior, but with manners which had been formed in a bad school; pert and familiar; that all her notions were drawn from one set of people, and one style of living; that, if not foolish, she was ignorant, and that her society would certainly do Mr. Elton good.

Harriet would have been a better match. If not wise or refined herself, she would have connected him with those who were; but Miss Hawkins, it might be fairly supposed, from her easy conceit, had been the best of her own set. The rich brother-in-law, near Bristol, was the pride of the alliance, and his place and his carriages were the pride of him.

The very first subject, after being seated, was Maple Grove, "My brother, Mr. Suckling's seat"; a comparison of Hartfield to Maple Grove. The grounds of Hartfield were small, but neat and pretty; and the house was modern and well-built. Mrs. Elton seemed most favourably impressed by the size of the room, the entrance, and all that she could see or imagine. "Very like Maple Grove indeed! She was quite struck by the likeness!—That room was the very shape and size of the morning-room at Maple Grove; her sister's favourite room." Mr. Elton was appealed to. "Was not it astonishingly like?—She could really almost fancy herself at Maple Grove.

"And the staircase.—You know, as I came in, I

observed how very like the staircase was ; placed exactly in the same part of the house. I really could not help exclaiming ! I assure you, Miss Woodhouse, it is very delightful to me to be reminded of a place I am so extremely partial to as Maple Grove. I have spent so many happy months there ! ” (with a little sigh of sentiment.) “ A charming place, undoubtedly, Everybody who sees it is struck by its beauty ; but to me it has been quite a home. Whenever you are transplanted, like me, Miss Woodhouse, you will understand how very delightful it is to meet with anything at all like what one has left behind. I always say this is quite one of the evils of matrimony.”

Emma made as slight a reply as she could ; but it was fully sufficient for Mrs. Elton, who only wanted to be talking herself.

“ So extremely like Maple Grove ! And it is not merely the house ; the grounds, I assure you, as far as I could observe, are strikingly like. The laurels at Maple Grove are in the same profusion as here, and stand very much in the same way—just across the lawn ; and I had a glimpse of a fine large tree, with a bench round it, which put me so exactly in mind ! My brother and sister will be enchanted with this place. People who have extensive grounds themselves are always pleased with anything in the same style.”

Emma doubted the truth of this sentiment. She had a great idea that people who had extensive grounds themselves cared very little for the extensive grounds of anybody else ; but it was not worth while to attack an error so double-dyed, and therefore only said in reply—

“ When you have seen more of this country I am

afraid you will think you have overrated Hartfield. Surrey is full of beauties."

"Oh! yes, I am quite aware of that. It is the garden of England, you know. Surrey is the garden of England."

"Yes; but we must not rest our claims on that distinction. Many counties, I believe, are called the garden of England, as well as Surrey."

"No, I fancy not," replied Mrs. Elton, with a most satisfied smile. "I never heard any county but Surrey called so."

Emma was silenced.

"My brother and sister have promised us a visit in the spring, or summer at farthest," continued Mrs. Elton; "and that will be our time for exploring. While they are with us we shall explore a great deal, I dare say. They will have their barouche-landau, of course, which holds four perfectly; and therefore, without saying anything of *our* carriage, we should be able to explore the different beauties extremely well. They would hardly come in their chaise, I think, at that season of the year. Indeed, when the time draws on, I shall decidedly recommend their bringing the barouche-landau; it will be so very much preferable. When people come into a beautiful country of this sort, you know, Miss Woodhouse, one naturally wishes them to see as much as possible; and Mr. Suckling is extremely fond of exploring. We explored to King's-Weston twice last summer, in that way, most delightfully, just after their first having the barouche-landau. You have many parties of that kind here, I suppose, Miss Woodhouse, every summer?"

"No; not immediately here. We are rather out of distance of the very striking beauties which attract

the sort of parties you speak of ; and we are a very quiet set of people, I believe ; more disposed to stay at home than engage in schemes of pleasure."

" Ah ! there is nothing like staying at home for real comfort. Nobody can be more devoted to home than I am. I was quite a proverb for it at Maple Grove. Many a time has Selina said, when she has been going to Bristol, ' I really cannot get this girl to move from the house. I absolutely must go in by myself, though I hate being stuck up in the barouche-landau without a companion : but Augusta, I believe, with her own good will, would never stir beyond the park paling.' Many a time has she said so ; and yet I am no advocate for entire seclusion. I think, on the contrary, when people shut themselves up entirely from society, it is a very bad thing ; and that it is much more advisable to mix in the world in a proper degree, without living in it either too much or too little. I perfectly understand your situation, however, Miss Woodhouse" (looking towards Mr. Woodhouse), " your father's state of health must be a great drawback. Why does not he try Bath ?—Indeed he should. Let me recommend Bath to you. I assure you I have no doubt of its doing Mr. Woodhouse good."

" My father tried it more than once, formerly, but without receiving any benefit ; and Mr. Perry, whose name, I dare say, is not unknown to you, does not conceive it would be at all more likely to be useful now."

" Ah ! that's a great pity ; for I assure you, Miss Woodhouse, where the waters do agree, it is quite wonderful the relief they give. In my Bath life I have seen such instances of it ! And it is so cheerful a place that it could not fail of being of use to

Mr. Woodhouse's spirits, which, I understand, are sometimes much depressed. And as to its recommendations to *you*, I fancy I need not take much pains to dwell on them. The advantages of Bath to the young are pretty generally understood. It would be a charming introduction for you, who have lived so secluded a life : and I could immediately secure you some of the best society in the place. A line from me would bring you a little host of acquaintance ; and my particular friend Mrs. Partridge, the lady I have always resided with when in Bath, would be most happy to show you any attentions, and would be the very person for you to go into public with."

It was as much as Emma could bear, without being impolite ! The idea of her being indebted to Mrs. Elton for what was called an *introduction*—of her going into public under the auspices of a friend of Mrs. Elton's—probably some vulgar dashing widow, who, with the help of a boarder, just made a shift to live ! The dignity of Miss Woodhouse, of Hartfield, was sunk indeed !

She restrained herself, however, from any of the reproofs she could have given, and only thanked Mrs. Elton coolly ; " but their going to Bath was quite out of the question ; and she was not perfectly convinced that the place might suit her better than her father." And then, to prevent further outrage and indignation, changed the subject directly.

" I do not ask whether you are musical, Mrs. Elton. Upon these occasions a lady's character generally precedes her ; and Highbury has long known that you are a superior performer."

" Oh ! no, indeed ; I must protest against any such idea. A superior performer !—very far from it, I assure you : consider from how partial a quarter

your information came. I am doatingly fond of music—passionately fond ; and my friends say I am not entirely devoid of taste ; but as to anything else, upon my honour my performance is *mediocre* to the last degree. You, Miss Woodhouse, I well know, play delightfully. I assure you it has been the greatest satisfaction, comfort, and delight to me to hear what a musical society I am got into. I absolutely cannot do without music : it is a necessary of life to me ; and having always been used to a very musical society, both at Maple Grove and in Bath, it would have been a most serious sacrifice. I honestly said as much to Mr. E. when he was speaking of my future home, and expressing his fears lest the retirement of it should be disagreeable ; and the inferiority of the house too—knowing what I had been accustomed to—of course he was not wholly without apprehension. When he was speaking of it in that way, I honestly said that *the world* I could give up—parties, balls, plays—for I had no fear of retirement. Blessed with so many resources within myself, the world was not necessary to *me*. I could do very well without it. To those who had no resources it was a different thing ; but my resources made me quite independent. And as to smaller-sized rooms than I had been used to, I really could not give it a thought. I hoped I was perfectly equal to any sacrifice of that description. Certainly, I had been accustomed to every luxury at Maple Grove ; but I did assure him that two carriages were not necessary to my happiness, nor were spacious apartments. ‘ But,’ said I, ‘ to be quite honest, I do not think I can live without something of a musical society. I condition for nothing else ; but, without music, life would be a blank to me.’ ”

“ We cannot suppose,” said Emma, smiling, “ that Mr. Elton would hesitate to assure you of there being a *very* musical society in Highbury ; and I hope you will not find he has outstepped the truth more than may be pardoned, in consideration of the motive.”

“ No, indeed, I have no doubts at all on that head. I am delighted to find myself in such a circle : I hope we shall have many sweet little concerts together. I think, Miss Woodhouse, you and I must establish a musical club, and have regular weekly meetings at your house, or ours. Will not it be a good plan ? If *we* exert ourselves, I think we shall not be long in want of allies. Something of that nature would be particularly desirable for *me*, as an inducement to keep me in practice ; for married women, you know—there is a sad story against them, in general. They are but too apt to give up music.”

“ But you, who are so extremely fond of it—there can be no danger, surely ? ”

“ I should hope not ; but really when I look around among my acquaintance, I tremble. Selina has entirely given up music ;—never touches the instrument, though she played sweetly. And the same may be said of Mrs. Jeffreys—Clara Partridge that was—and of the two Milmans, now Mrs. Bird and Mrs. James Cooper ; and of more than I can enumerate. Upon my word, it is enough to put one in a fright. I used to be quite angry with Selina ; but, really, I begin now to comprehend that a married woman has many things to call her attention. I believe I was half an hour this morning shut up with my house-keeper.”

“ But everything of that kind,” said Emma, “ will soon be in so regular a train——”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Elton, laughing, “ we shall see.”

Emma, finding her so determined upon neglecting her music, had nothing more to say ; and, after a moment's pause, Mrs. Elton chose another subject.

" We have been calling at Randalls," said she, " and found them both at home ; and very pleasant people they seem to be. I like them extremely. Mr. Weston seems an excellent creature—quite a first-rate favourite with me already, I assure you. And *she* appears so truly good—there is something so motherly and kind-hearted about her, that it wins upon one directly.—She was your governess, I think ?"

Emma was almost too much astonished to answer ; but Mrs. Elton hardly waited for the affirmative before she went on.

" Having understood as much, I was rather astonished to find her so very ladylike. But she is really quite the gentlewoman."

" Mrs. Weston's manners," said Emma, " were always particularly good. Their propriety, simplicity, and elegance would make them the safest model for any young woman."

" And who do you think came in while we were there ?"

Emma was quite at a loss. The tone implied some old acquaintance, and how could she possibly guess ?

" Knightley !" continued Mrs. Elton ;—" Knightley himself ! Was it not lucky ? For, not being within when he called the other day, I had never seen him before ; and of course, as so particular a friend of Mr. E.'s, I had a great curiosity. ' My friend Knightley ' had been so often mentioned, that I was really impatient to see him ; and I must do my *cara sposo* the justice to say that he need not be ashamed of his friend. Knightley is quite the gentleman ;

I like him very much. Decidedly, I think, a very gentlemanlike man."

Happily, it was now time to be gone. They were off, and Emma could breathe.

"Insufferable woman!" was her immediate exclamation. "Worse than I had supposed. Absolutely insufferable! Knightley!—I could not have believed it. Knightley!—never seen him in her life before, and call him Knightley! and discover that he is a gentleman. A little upstart, vulgar being, with her Mr. E. and her *cara sposo*, and her resources, and all her airs of pert pretention and underbred finery. Actually to discover that Mr. Knightley is a gentleman! I doubt whether he will return the compliment, and discover her to be a lady. I could not have believed it! And to propose that she and I should unite to form a musical club! One would fancy we were bosom friends! And Mrs. Weston! Astonished that the person who had brought me up should be a gentlewoman! Worse and worse! I never met with her equal. Much beyond my hopes! Harriet is disgraced by any comparison. Oh! what would Frank Churchill say to her if he were here? How angry and how diverted he would be! Ah! there I am thinking of him directly. Always the first person to be thought of! How I catch myself out! Frank Churchill comes as regularly into my mind——!"

All this ran so glibly through her thoughts, that by the time her father had arranged himself, after the bustle of the Eltons' departure, and was ready to speak, she was very tolerably capable of attending.

"Well, my dear," he deliberately began, "considering we never saw her before, she seems a very pretty sort of young lady; and I dare say she was

very much pleased with you. She speaks a little too quick. A little quickness of voice there is which rather hurts the ear. But I believe I am nice ; I do not like strange voices ; and nobody speaks like you and poor Miss Taylor. However, she seems a very obliging, pretty-behaved young lady, and no doubt will make him a very good wife. Though I think he had better not have married. I made the best excuses I could for not having been able to wait on him and Mrs. Elton on this happy occasion : I said that I hoped I *should* in the course of the summer. But I ought to have gone before. Not to wait upon a bride is very remiss. Ah ! it shows what a sad invalid I am ! But I do not like the corner into Vicarage Lane."

"I dare say your apologies were accepted, sir. Mr. Elton knows you."

"Yes ; but a young lady—a bride—I ought to have paid my respects to her if possible. It was being very deficient."

"But, my dear papa, you are no friend to matrimony ; and therefore why should you be so anxious to pay your respects to a *bride* ? It ought to be no recommendation to *you*. It is encouraging people to marry if you make so much of them."

"No, my dear, I never encouraged anybody to marry, but I would always wish to pay every proper attention to a lady—and a bride especially, is never to be neglected. More is avowedly due to *her*. A bride, you know, my dear, is always the first in company, let the others be who they may."

"Well, papa, if this is not encouragement to marry I do not know what is. And I should never have expected you to be lending your sanction to such vanity-baits for poor young ladies."

“ My dear, you do not understand me. This is a matter of mere common politeness and good-breeding, and has nothing to do with any encouragement to people to marry.”

Emma had done. Her father was growing nervous, and could not understand *her*. Her mind returned to Mrs. Elton's offences, and long, very long, did they occupy her.

The Ball at the Crown

[Mr. and Mrs. Weston, under the inspiration of Frank Churchill, give a dance at the principal inn. Frank is Mr. Weston's son by a former marriage, and has been adopted by a Mr. and Mrs. Churchill.]

No misfortune occurred again to prevent the ball. The day approached, the day arrived ; and, after a morning of some anxious watching, Frank Churchill, in all the certainty of his own self, reached Randalls before dinner ; and everything was safe.

No second meeting had there yet been between him and Emma. The room at the Crown was to witness it ; but it would be better than a common meeting in a crowd. Mr. Weston had been so very earnest in his entreaties for her early attendance, for her arriving there as soon as possible after themselves, for the purpose of taking her opinion as to the propriety and comfort of the rooms before any other persons came, that she could not refuse him, and therefore must spend some quiet interval in the young man's company. She was to convey Harriet, and they drove to the Crown in good time, the Randalls' party just sufficiently before them.

Frank Churchill seemed to have been on the watch ; and though he did not say much, his eyes declared that he meant to have a delightful evening. They all walked about together, to see that everything was as it should be ; and within a few minutes were joined by the contents of another carriage, which Emma could not hear the sound of at first without great surprise. " So unreasonably early ! " she was going to exclaim ; but she presently found that it was a family of old friends, who were coming, like herself, by particular desire, to help Mr. Weston's judgment ; and they were so very closely followed by another carriage of cousins, who had been entreated to come early with the same distinguishing earnestness, on the same errand, that it seemed as if half the company might soon be collected together for the purpose of preparatory inspection.

Emma perceived that her taste was not the only taste on which Mr. Weston depended, and felt that to be the favourite and intimate of a man who had so many intimates and confidantes, was not the very first distinction in the scale of vanity. She liked his open manners, but a little less of open-heartedness would have made him a higher character.—General benevolence, but not general friendship, made a man what he ought to be.—She could fancy such a man.

The whole party walked about, and looked, and praised again ; and then, having nothing else to do, formed a sort of half-circle round the fire, to observe in their various modes, till other subjects were started, that, though *May*, a fire in the evening was still very pleasant.

Emma found that it was not Mr. Weston's fault that the number of privy counsellors was not yet larger. They had stopped at Mrs. Bates's door to

offer the use of their carriage, but the aunt and niece were to be brought by the Eltons.

Frank was standing by her, but not steadily ; there was a restlessness, which showed a mind not at ease. He was looking about, he was going to the door, he was watching for the sound of other carriages—impatient to begin, or afraid of being always near her.

Mrs. Elton was spoken of. “ I think she must be here soon,” said he. “ I have a great curiosity to see Mrs. Elton, I have heard so much of her. It cannot be long, I think, before she comes.”

A carriage was heard. He was on the move immediately ; but coming back, said—

“ I am forgetting that I am not acquainted with her. I have never seen either Mr. or Mrs. Elton. I have no business to put myself forward.”

Mr. and Mrs. Elton appeared ; and all the smiles and the proprieties passed.

“ But Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax ! ” said Mr. Weston, looking about. “ We thought you were to bring them.”

The mistake had been slight. The carriage was sent for them now. Emma longed to know what Frank’s first opinion of Mrs. Elton might be ; how he was affected by the studied elegance of her dress, and her smiles of graciousness. He was immediately qualifying himself to form an opinion, by giving her very proper attention, after the introduction had passed.

In a few minutes the carriage returned.—Somebody talked of rain.—“ I will see that there are umbrellas, sir,” said Frank to his father : “ Miss Bates must not be forgotten ” ; and away he went. Mr. Weston was following : but Mrs. Elton detained him, to gratify

him by her opinion of his son ; and so briskly did she begin, that the young man himself, though by no means moving slowly, could hardly be out of hearing.

“ A very fine young man, indeed, Mr. Weston. You know I candidly told you I should form my own opinion ; and I am happy to say that I am extremely pleased with him. You may believe me. I never compliment. I think him a very handsome young man, and his manners are precisely what I like and approve,—so truly the gentleman, without the least conceit or puppyism. You must know I have a vast dislike to puppies—quite a horror of them. They were never tolerated at Maple Grove. Neither Mr. Suckling nor me had ever any patience with them ; and we used sometimes to say very cutting things. Selina, who is mild almost to a fault, bore with them much better.”

While she talked of his son, Mr. Weston’s attention was chained ; but when she got to Maple Grove, he could recollect that there were ladies just arriving to be attended to, and with happy smiles must hurry away.

Mrs. Elton turned to Mrs. Weston. “ I have no doubt of its being our carriage with Miss Bates and Jane. Our coachman and horses are so extremely expeditious ! I believe we drive faster than anybody. What a pleasure it is to send one’s carriage for a friend ! I understand you were so kind as to offer, but another time it will be quite unnecessary. You may be very sure I shall always take care of *them*.”

Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax, escorted by the two gentlemen, walked into the room ; and Mrs. Elton seemed to think it as much her duty as Mrs. Weston’s to receive them. Her gestures and movements might be understood by anyone who looked on like

Emma ; but her words, everybody's words, were soon lost under the incessant flow of Miss Bates, who came in talking, and had not finished her speech under many minutes after her being admitted into the circle at the fire. As the door opened she was heard—

“ So very obliging of you !—No rain at all. Nothing to signify. I do not care for myself. Quite thick shoes. And Jane declares—Well ! ” (as soon as she was within the door), “ well ! This is brilliant indeed ! This is admirable ! Excellently contrived, upon my word. Nothing wanting. Could not have imagined it. So well lighted up ! Jane, Jane, look ! did you ever see anything—? Oh ! Mr. Weston, you must really have had Aladdin's lamp. Good Mrs. Stokes would not know her own room again. I saw her as I came in ; she was standing in the entrance. ‘ Oh ! Mrs. Stokes,’ said I—but I had not time for more.” She was now met by Mrs. Weston. “ Very well, I thank you, ma'am. I hope you are quite well. Very happy to hear it. So afraid you might have a headache ! seeing you pass by so often, and knowing how much trouble you must have. Delighted to hear it indeed !—Ah ! dear Mrs. Elton, so obliged to you for the carriage ; excellent time ; Jane and I quite ready. Did not keep the horses a moment. Most comfortable carriage. Oh ! and I am sure our thanks are due to you, Mrs. Weston, on that score. Mrs. Elton had most kindly sent Jane a note, or we should have been. But two such offers in one day ! Never were such neighbours. I said to my mother, ‘ Upon my word, ma'am——’ Thank you, my mother is remarkably well. Gone to Mr. Woodhouse's. I made her take her shawl—for the evenings are not warm—her large new shawl, Mrs. Dixon's wedding present.

So kind of her to think of my mother ! Bought at Weymouth, you know ; Mr. Dixon's choice. There were three others, Jane says, which they hesitated about some time. Colonel Campbell rather preferred an olive.—My dear Jane, are you sure you did not wet your feet ? It was but a drop or two, but I am so afraid ; but Mr. Frank Churchill was so extremely—and there was a mat to step upon. I shall never forget his extreme politeness. Oh ! Mr. Frank Churchill, I must tell you my mother's spectacles have never been in fault since ; the rivet never came out again. My mother often talks of your good-nature ; does not she, Jane ? Do not we often talk of Mr. Frank Churchill ? Ah ! here's Miss Woodhouse. Dear Miss Woodhouse, how do you do ? Very well, I thank you, quite well. This is meeting quite in fairyland. Such a transformation ! Must not compliment, I know " (eyeing Emma most complacently)—" that would be rude ; but upon my word, Miss Woodhouse, you do look—how do you like Jane's hair. You are a judge. She did it all herself. Quite wonderful how she does her hair ! No hairdresser from London, I think, could—Ah ! Dr. Hughes, I declare—and Mrs. Hughes. Must go and speak to Dr. and Mrs. Hughes for a moment. How do you do ? How do you do ? Very well I thank you. This is delightful, is it not ? Where's dear Mr. Richard ? Oh ! there he is. Don't disturb him. Much better employed talking to the young ladies. How do you do, Mr. Richard ? I saw you the other day as you rode through the town. Mrs. Otway, I protest, and good Mr. Otway, and Miss Otway and Miss Caroline. Such a host of friends ! and Mr. George and Mr. Arthur ! How do you do ? How do you all do ? Quite well, I am much obliged

to you. Never better. Don't I hear another carriage? Who can this be?—very likely the worthy Coles. Upon my word, this is charming, to be standing about among such friends! and such a noble fire! I am quite roasted. No coffee, I thank you, for me; never take coffee. A little tea, if you please, sir, by-and-by; no hurry. Oh! here it comes. Everything is so good!”

Frank Churchill returned to his station by Emma; and as soon as Miss Bates was quiet, she found herself necessarily overhearing the discourse of Mrs. Elton and Miss Fairfax, who were standing a little way behind her. He was thoughtful. Whether he were overhearing too she could not determine. After a good many compliments to Jane on her dress and look—compliments very quietly and properly taken—Mrs. Elton was evidently wanting to be complimented herself—and it was, “How do you like my gown? How do you like my trimming?—How has Wright done my hair?” with many other relative questions, all answered with patient politeness. Mrs. Elton then said—

“Nobody can think less of dress in general than I do: but upon such an occasion as this, when everybody's eyes are so much upon me, and in compliment to the Westons, who I have no doubt are giving this ball chiefly to do me honour. I would not wish to be inferior to others; and I see very few pearls in the room except mine.—So Frank Churchill is a capital dancer, I understand. We shall see if our styles suit.—A fine young man certainly is Frank Churchill. I like him very well.”

At this moment Frank began talking so vigorously, that Emma could not but imagine he had overheard his own praises, and did not want to hear more;—and

the voices of the ladies were drowned for a while, till another suspension brought Mrs. Elton's tones again distinctly forward. Mr. Elton had just joined them, and his wife was exclaiming—

“ Oh ! you have found us out at last, have you, in our seclusion ?—I was this moment telling Jane, I thought you would begin to be impatient for tidings of us.”

“ Jane ! ” repeated Frank Churchill, with a look of surprise and displeasure. “ That is easy ; but Miss Fairfax does not disapprove it, I suppose.”

“ How do you like Mrs. Elton ? ” said Emma, in a whisper.

“ Not at all.”

“ You are ungrateful.”

“ Ungrateful !—What do you mean ? ” Then changing from a frown to a smile,—“ No, do not tell me,—I do not want to know what you mean. Where is my father ? When are we to begin dancing ? ”

Emma could hardly understand him ; he seemed in an odd humour. He walked off to find his father, but was quickly back again with both Mr. and Mrs. Weston. He had met with them in a little perplexity, which must be laid before Emma. It had just occurred to Mrs. Weston that Mrs. Elton must be asked to begin the ball ; that she would expect it ; which interfered with all their wishes of giving Emma that distinction. Emma heard the sad truth with fortitude.

“ And what are we to do for a proper partner for her ? ” said Mr. Weston. “ She will think Frank ought to ask her.”

Frank turned instantly to Emma, to claim her former promise ; and boasted himself an engaged

man, which his father looked his most perfect approbation of—and it then appeared that Mrs. Weston was wanting *him* to dance with Mrs. Elton himself, and that their business was to help to persuade him into it, which was done pretty soon. Mr. Weston and Mrs. Elton led the way; Mr. Frank Churchill and Miss Woodhouse followed. Emma must submit to stand second to Mrs. Elton though she had always considered the ball as peculiarly for her. It was almost enough to make her think of marrying.

Mrs. Elton had undoubtedly the advantage, at this time, in vanity completely gratified; for though she had intended to begin with Frank Churchill, she could not lose by the change. Mr. Weston might be his son's superior. In spite of this little rub, however, Emma was smiling with enjoyment, delighted to see the respectable length of the set as it was forming, and to feel that she has so many hours of unusual festivity before her. She was more disturbed by Mr. Knightley's not dancing than by anything else. There he was, among the standers-by, where he ought not to be; he ought to be dancing, not classing himself with the husbands, and fathers, and whist-players, who were pretending to feel an interest in the dance till their rubbers were made up—so young as he looked! He could not have appeared to greater advantage, perhaps, anywhere, than where he had placed himself. His tall, firm, upright figure, among the bulky forms and stooping shoulders of the elderly men, was such as Emma felt must draw everybody's eyes; and, excepting her own partner, there was not one among the whole row of young men who could be compared with him. He moved a few steps nearer, and those few steps were enough to prove in how gentlemanlike a manner, with what natural grace, he

must have danced, would he but take the trouble. Whenever she caught his eye, she forced him to smile ; but in general he was looking grave. She wished he could love a ball-room better, and could like Frank Churchill better. He seemed often observing her. She must not flatter herself that he thought of her dancing ; but if he were criticising her behaviour, she did not feel afraid. There was nothing like flirtation between her and her partner. They seemed more like cheerful easy friends than lovers. That Frank Churchill thought less of her than he had done was indubitable.

The ball proceeded pleasantly. The anxious cares, the incessant attentions of Mrs. Weston were not thrown away. Everybody seemed happy ; and the praise of being a delightful ball, which is seldom bestowed till after a ball has ceased to be, was repeatedly given in the very beginning of the existence of this. Of very important, very recordable events, it was not more productive than such meetings usually are. There was one, however, which Emma thought something of.—The two last dances before supper were begun, and Harriet had no partner ;—the only young lady sitting down ; and so equal had been hitherto the number of dancers, that how there could be any one disengaged was the wonder. But Emma's wonder lessened soon afterwards, on seeing Mr. Elton sauntering about. He would not ask Harriet to dance, if it were possible to be avoided ; she was sure he would not—and she was expecting him every moment to escape into the card-room.

Escape, however, was not his plan. He came to the part of the room where the sitters-by were collected, spoke to some, and walked about in front of them, as if to show his liberty, and his resolution

of maintaining it. He did not omit being sometimes directly before Miss Smith, or speaking to those who were close to her. Emma saw it. She was not yet dancing; she was working her way up from the bottom, and had therefore leisure to look around, and by only turning her head a little she saw it all. When she was half way up the set, the whole group were exactly behind her, and she would no longer allow her eyes to watch; but Mr. Elton was so near, that she heard every syllable of a dialogue which just then took place between him and Mrs. Weston; and she perceived that his wife, who was standing immediately above her, was not only listening also, but even encouraging him by significant glances. The kind-hearted, gentle Mrs. Weston had left her seat to join him and say, "Do not you dance, Mr. Elton?" to which his prompt reply was, "Most readily, Mrs. Weston, if you will dance with me."

"Me!—oh! no—I would get you a better partner than myself. I am no dancer."

"If Mrs. Gilbert wishes to dance," said he, "I shall have great pleasure, I am sure; for, though beginning to feel myself rather an old married man, and that my dancing days are over, it would give me very great pleasure at any time to stand up with an old friend like Mrs. Gilbert."

"Mrs. Gilbert does not mean to dance, but there is a young lady disengaged whom I should be very glad to see dancing—Miss Smith."

"Miss Smith—oh!—I had not observed. You are extremely obliging—and if I were not an old married—but my dancing days are over, Mrs. Weston. You will excuse me. Anything else I should be most happy to do, at your command—but my dancing days are over."

Mrs. Weston said no more ; and Emma could imagine with what surprise and mortification she must be returning to her seat. This was Mr. Elton ! the amiable, obliging, gentle Mr. Elton. She looked round for a moment ; he had joined Mr. Knightley at a little distance, and was arranging himself for settled conversation, while smiles of high glee passed between him and his wife. She would not look again. Her heart was in a glow, and she feared her face might be as hot.

In another moment a happier sight caught her—Mr. Knightley leading Harriet to the set ! Never had she been more surprised, seldom more delighted, than at that instant. She was all pleasure and gratitude, both for Harriet and herself, and longed to be thanking him ; and though too distant for speech, her countenance said much, as soon as she could catch his eye again.

His dancing proved to be just what she had believed it, extremely good ; and Harriet would have seemed almost too lucky, if it had not been for the cruel state of things before, and for the very complete enjoyment and very high sense of the distinction which her happy features announced. It was not thrown away on her ; she bounded higher than ever, flew farther down the middle, and was in a continual course of smiles.

Mr. Elton had retreated into the card-room, looking (Emma trusted) very foolish. She did not think he was quite so hardened as his wife, though growing very like her ; *she* spoke some of her feelings, by observing audibly to her partner—

“ Knightley has taken pity on poor little Miss Smith !—Very good-natured, I declare.”

Supper was announced. The move began ; and

Miss Bates might be heard from that moment without interruption, till her being seated at table and taking up her spoon.

“ Jane, Jane, my dear Jane, where are you ? Here is your tippet. Mrs. Weston begs you to put on your tippet. She says she is afraid there will be draughts in the passage, though everything has been done—one door nailed up—quantities of matting—my dear Jane, indeed you must. Mr. Churchill, oh ! you are too obliging. How well you put it on—so gratified ! Excellent dancing indeed. Yes, my dear, I ran home, as I said I should, to help grandmamma to bed, and got back again, and nobody missed me. I set off without saying a word, just as I told you. Grandmamma was quite well, had a charming evening with Mr. Woodhouse, a vast deal of chat, and backgammon. Tea was made downstairs, biscuits and baked apples, and wine before she came away : amazing luck in some of her throws : and she inquired a great deal about you, how you were amused, and who were your partners. ‘ Oh ! ’ said I, ‘ I shall not forestall Jane ; I left her dancing with Mr. George Otway ; she will love to tell you all about it herself to-morrow : her first partner was Mr. Elton ; I do not know who will ask her next, perhaps Mr. William Cox.’ My dear sir, you are too obliging. Is there nobody you would not rather ? I am not helpless. Sir, you are most kind. Upon my word, Jane on one arm, and me on the other. Stop, stop, let us stand a little back, Mrs. Elton is going ; dear Mrs. Elton, how elegant she looks—beautiful lace. Now we all follow in her train. Quite the queen of the evening ! Well, here we are at the passage. Two steps, Jane, take care of the two steps. Oh, no, there is but one. Well, I was persuaded there were two. How very odd ! I

was convinced there were two, and there is but one. I never saw anything equal to the comfort and style—candles everywhere. I was telling you of your grandmamma, Jane—there was a little disappointment. The baked apples and biscuits, excellent in their way, you know ; but there was a delicate fricasee of sweetbread and some asparagus brought in at first, and good Mr. Woodhouse, not thinking the asparagus quite boiled enough, sent it all out again. Now there is nothing grandmamma loves better than sweetbread and asparagus—so she was rather disappointed ; but we agreed we would not speak of it to anybody, for fear of its getting round to dear Miss Woodhouse, who would be so very much concerned. Well, this is brilliant ! I am all amazement !—could not have supposed anything—such elegance and profusion ! I have seen nothing like it since—Well, where shall we sit ? Where shall we sit ? Anywhere, so that Jane is not in a draught. Where *I* sit is of no consequence. Oh ! do you recommend this side ? Well, I am sure, Mr. Churchill—only it seems too good—but just as you please. What you direct in this house cannot be wrong. Dear Jane, how shall we ever recollect half the dishes for grandmamma ? Soup too ! Bless me ! I should not be helped so soon, but it smells most excellent, and I cannot help beginning.”

Emma had no opportunity of speaking to Mr. Knightley till after supper ; but, when they were all in the ball-room again, her eyes invited him irresistibly to come to her and be thanked. He was warm in his reprobation of Mr. Elton’s conduct ; it had been unpardonable rudeness ; and Mrs. Elton’s looks also received the due share of censure.

“ They aimed at wounding more than Harriet,”

said he. "Emma, why is it that they are your enemies?"

He looked with smiling penetration; and, on receiving no answer, added, "*She* ought not to be angry with you, I suspect, whatever he may be. To that surmise, you say nothing, of course; but confess, Emma, that you did want him to marry Harriet."

"I did," replied Emma, "and they cannot forgive me."

He shook his head; but there was a smile of indulgence with it, and he only said—

"I shall not scold you. I leave you to your own reflections."

"Can you trust me with such flatterers? Does my vain spirit ever tell me I am wrong?"

"Not your vain spirit, but your serious spirit. If one leads you wrong, I am sure the other tells you of it."

"I do own myself to have been completely mistaken in Mr. Elton. There is a littleness about him which you discovered, and which I did not: and I was fully convinced of his being in love with Harriet. It was through a series of strange blunders!"

"And, in return for your acknowledging so much, I will do you the justice to say, that you would have chosen for him better than he has chosen for himself. Harriet Smith has some first-rate qualities, which Mrs. Elton is totally without. An unpretending, single-minded, artless girl—ininitely to be preferred by any man of sense and taste to such a woman as Mrs. Elton. I found Harriet more conversable than I expected."

Emma was extremely gratified. They were inter-

rupted by the bustle of Mr. Weston calling on everybody to begin dancing again.

"Come, Miss Woodhouse, Miss Otway, Miss Fairfax, what are you all doing? Come, Emma, set your companions the example. Everybody is lazy! Everybody is asleep!"

"I am ready," said Emma, "whenever I am wanted."

"Whom are you going to dance with?" asked Mr. Knightley.

She hesitated a moment, and then replied, "With you, if you will ask me."

"Will you?" said he, offering his hand.

"Indeed I will. You have shown that you can dance, and you know we are not really so much brother and sister as to make it at all improper."

"Brother and sister!—no, indeed."

The Picnic at Box Hill

[This incident is the cause of several unfortunate errors, and is signalised by the most regrettable rudeness of Emma to the irritating Miss Bates.]

They had a very fine day for Box Hill; and all the other outward circumstances of arrangement, accommodation, and punctuality, were in favour of a pleasant party. Mr. Weston directed the whole, officiating safely between Hartfield and the vicarage, and everybody was in good time. Emma and Harriet went together; Miss Bates and her niece with the Eltons; the gentlemen on horseback. Mrs. Weston remained with Mr. Woodhouse. Nothing was wanting but to be happy when they got there.

Seven miles were travelled in expectation of enjoyment, and everybody had a burst of admiration on first arriving ; but in the general amount of the day there was deficiency. There was a languor, a want of spirits, a want of union, which could not be got over. They separated too much into parties. The Eltons walked together ; Mr. Knightley took charge of Miss Bates and Jane ; and Emma and Harriet belonged to Frank Churchill. And Mr. Weston tried, in vain, to make them harmonise better. It seemed at first an accidental division, but it never materially varied. Mr. and Mrs. Elton, indeed, showed no unwillingness to mix, and be as agreeable as they could ; but during the two whole hours that were spent on the hill, there seemed a principle of separation between the other parties, too strong for any fine prospects, or any cold collation, or any cheerful Mr. Weston, to remove.

At first it was downright dulness to Emma. She had never seen Frank Churchill so silent and stupid. He said nothing worth hearing—looked without seeing—admired without intelligence—listened without knowing what she said. While he was so dull, it was no wonder that Harriet should be dull likewise ; and they were both insufferable.

When they all sat down it was better—to her taste a great deal better—for Frank Churchill grew talkative and gay, making her his first object. Every distinguishing attention that could be paid, was paid to her. To amuse her, and be agreeable in her eyes, seemed all that he cared for—and Emma, glad to be enlivened, not sorry to be flattered, was gay and easy too, and gave him all the friendly encouragement, the admission to be gallant, which she had ever given in the first and most animating period of their

acquaintance ; but which now, in her own estimation, meant nothing, though in the judgment of most people looking on, it must have had such an appearance as no English word but flirtation could very well describe. " Mr. Frank Churchill and Miss Woodhouse flirted together excessively." They were laying themselves open to that very phrase—and to having it sent off in a letter to Maple Grove by one lady, to Ireland by another. Not that Emma was gay and thoughtless from any real felicity ; it was rather because she felt less happy than she had expected. She laughed because she was disappointed ; and though she liked him for his attentions, and thought them all, whether in friendship, admiration, or playfulness, extremely judicious, they were not winning back her heart. She still intended him for her friend.

" How much I am obliged to you," said he, " for telling me to come to-day !—If it had not been for you, I should certainly have lost all the happiness of this party. I had quite determined to go away again."

" Yes, you were very cross ; and I do not know what about, except that you were too late for the best strawberries. I was a kinder friend than you deserved. But you were humble. You begged hard to be commanded to come."

" Don't say I was cross. I was fatigued. The heat overcame me."

" It is hotter to-day."

" Not to my feelings. I am perfectly comfortable to-day."

" You are comfortable because you are under command."

" Your command ?—Yes."

“ Perhaps I intended you to say so, but I meant self-command. You had, somehow or other, broken bounds yesterday, and run away from your own management ; but to-day you are got back again—and as I cannot be always with you, it is best to believe your temper under your own command rather than mine.”

“ It comes to the same thing. I can have no self-command without a motive. You order me, whether you speak or not. And you can be always with me. You are always with me.”

“ Dating from three o’clock yesterday. My perpetual influence could not begin earlier, or you would not have been so much out of humour before.”

“ Three o’clock yesterday ! That is your date. I thought I had seen you first in February.”

“ Your gallantry is really unanswerable. But ” (lowering her voice) “ nobody speaks except ourselves, and it is rather too much to be talking nonsense for the entertainment of seven silent people.”

“ I say nothing of which I am ashamed,” replied he, with lively impudence. “ I saw you first in February. Let everybody on the Hill hear me if they can. Let my accents swell to Mickleham on one side, and Dorking on the other. I saw you first in February.” And then whispering—“ Our companions are excessively stupid. What shall we do to rouse them ? Any nonsense will serve. They *shall* talk. Ladies and gentlemen, I am ordered by Miss Woodhouse (who, wherever she is, presides) to say, that she desires to know what you are all thinking of ? ”

Some laughed, and answered good-humouredly. Miss Bates said a great deal ; Mrs. Elton swelled at the idea of Miss Woodhouse’s presiding ; Mr. Knightley’s answer was the most distinct.

"Is Miss Woodhouse sure that she would like to hear what we are all thinking of?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Emma, laughing as carelessly as she could—"upon no account in the world. It is the very last thing I would stand the brunt of just now. Let me hear anything rather than what you are all thinking of. I will not say quite all. There are one or two perhaps" (glancing at Mr. Weston and Harriet), "whose thoughts I might not be afraid of knowing."

"It is a sort of thing," cried Mrs. Elton emphatically, "which *I* should not have thought myself privileged to inquire into. Though, perhaps, as the *chaperon* of the party—I never was in any circle—exploring parties—young ladies—married women—"

Her mutterings were chiefly to her husband; and he murmured, in reply—

"Very true, my love, very true. Exactly so, indeed—quite unheard of—but some ladies say anything. Better pass it off as a joke. Everybody knows what is due to *you*."

"It will not do," whispered Frank to Emma, "they are most of them affronted. I will attack them with more address. Ladies and gentlemen, I am ordered by Miss Woodhouse to say, that she waives her right of knowing exactly what you may all be thinking of, and only requires something very entertaining from each of you, in a general way. Here are seven of you, besides myself (who, she is pleased to say, am very entertaining already), and she only demands from each of you, either one thing very clever, be it prose or verse, original or repeated; or two things moderately clever; or three things very dull indeed; and she engages to laugh heartily at them all."

"Oh! very well," exclaimed Miss Bates; "then

I need not be uneasy. 'Three things very dull indeed.' That will just do for me, you know. I shall be sure to say three dull things as soon as ever I open my mouth, shan't I?" (looking round with the most good-humoured dependence on everybody's assent.)

"Do not you all think I shall?"

Emma could not resist.

"Ah! ma'am, but there may be a difficulty. Pardon me, but you will be limited as to number—only three at once."

Miss Bates, deceived by the mock ceremony of her manner, did not immediately catch her meaning; but, when it burst on her, it could not anger, though a slight blush showed that it could pain her.

"Ah! well—to be sure. Yes, I see what she means" (turning to Mr. Knightley) "and I will try to hold my tongue. I must make myself very disagreeable, or she would not have said such a thing to an old friend."

"I like your plan," cried Mr. Weston. "Agreed, agreed. I will do my best. I am making a conundrum. How will a conundrum reckon?"

"Low, I am afraid, sir, very low," answered his son; "but we shall be indulgent, especially to any one who leads the way."

"No, no," said Emma, "it will not reckon low. A conundrum of Mr. Weston's shall clear him and his next neighbour. Come, sir, pray let me hear it."

"I doubt its being very clever myself," said Mr. Weston. "It is too much a matter of fact; but here it is—What two letters of the alphabet are there that express perfection?"

"What two letters—express perfection? I am sure I do not know."

"Ah! you will never guess. You" (to Emma),

"I am certain, will never guess. I will tell you. M and A. Emma. Do you understand?"

Understanding and gratification came together. It might be a very indifferent piece of wit, but Emma found a great deal to laugh at and enjoy in it: and so did Frank and Harriet. It did not seem to touch the rest of the party equally; some looked very stupid about it, and Mr. Knightley gravely said—

"This explains the sort of clever thing that is wanted, and Mr. Weston has done very well for himself: but he must have knocked up everybody else. *Perfection* should not have come quite so soon."

"Oh! for myself, I protest I must be excused," said Mrs. Elton. "*I* really cannot attempt—I am not at all fond of the sort of thing. I had an acrostic once sent to me upon my own name which I was not at all pleased with. I knew who it came from. An abominable puppy! You know who I mean" (nodding to her husband). "These kind of things are very well at Christmas, when one is sitting round the fire; but quite out of place, in my opinion, when one is exploring about the country in summer. Miss Woodhouse must excuse me. I am not one of those who have witty things at everybody's service. I do not pretend to be a wit. I have a great deal of vivacity in my own way, but I really must be allowed to judge when to speak, and when to hold my tongue. Pass us, if you please, Mr. Churchill. Pass Mr. E., Knightley, Jane, and myself. We have nothing clever to say—not one of us."

"Yes, yes, pray pass *me*," added her husband, with a sort of sneering consciousness; "*I* have nothing to say that can entertain Miss Woodhouse, or any other young lady. An old married man—quite good for nothing. Shall we walk, Augusta?"

“ With all my heart. I am really tired of exploring so long on one spot. Come, Jane, take my other arm.”

Jane declined it, however, and the husband and wife walked off. “ Happy couple ! ” said Frank Churchill, as soon as they were out of hearing ; “ how well they suit one another ! Very lucky—marrying as they did, upon an acquaintance formed only in a public place ! They only knew each other, I think, a few weeks in Bath ! Peculiarly lucky ! for as to any real knowledge of a person’s disposition that Bath, or any public place, can give—it is all nothing ; there can be no knowledge. It is only by seeing women in their own homes, among their own set, just as they always are, that you can form any just judgment. Short of that, it is all guess and luck—and will generally be ill-luck. How many a man has committed himself on a short acquaintance, and rued it all the rest of his life ! ”

Miss Fairfax, who had seldom spoken before, except among her own confederates, spoke now.

“ Such things do occur, undoubtedly.” She was stopped by a cough. Frank Churchill turned towards her to listen.

“ You were speaking,” said he, gravely. She recovered her voice.

“ I was only going to observe, that though such unfortunate circumstances do sometimes occur both to men and women, I cannot imagine them to be very frequent. A hasty and imprudent attachment may arise—but there is generally time to recover from it afterwards. I would be understood to mean, that it can only be weak, irresolute characters (whose happiness must be always at the mercy of chance), who will suffer an unfortunate acquaintance to be an inconvenience, an oppression for ever.”

He made no answer ; merely looked, and bowed in submission ; and soon afterwards said, in a lively tone—

“ Well, I have so little confidence in my own judgment, that whenever I marry, I hope somebody will choose my wife for me ! Will you ? ” (turning to Emma). “ Will you choose a wife for me. I am sure I should like anybody fixed on by you. You provide for the family, you know ” (with a smile at his father). “ Find somebody for me. I am in no hurry. Adopt her ; educate her.”

“ And make her like myself.”

“ By all means, if you can.”

“ Very well. I undertake the commission. You shall have a charming wife.”

“ She must be very lively, and have hazel eyes. I care for nothing else. I shall go abroad for a couple of years.—and when I return, I shall come to you for my wife. Remember.”

Emma was in no danger of forgetting. It was a commission to touch every favourite feeling. Would not Harriet be the very creature described ? Hazle eyes excepted, two years more might make her all that he wished. He might even have Harriet in his thoughts at the moment ; who could say ? Referring the education to her seemed to imply it.

“ Now ma’am,” said Jane to her aunt, “ shall we join Mrs. Elton ? ”

“ If you please, my dear. With all my heart. I am quite ready. I was ready to have gone with her, but this will do just as well. We shall soon overtake her. There she is—no, that’s somebody else. That’s one of the ladies in the Irish car party, not at all like her. Well, I declare——”

They walked off, followed in half a minute by

Mr. Knightley. Mr. Weston, his son, Emma, and Harriet only remained ; and the young man's spirits now rose to a pitch almost unpleasant. Even Emma grew tired at last of flattery and merriment, and wished herself rather walking quietly about with any of the others, or sitting almost alone, and quite unattended to, in tranquil observation of the beautiful views beneath her. The appearance of the servants looking out for them to give notice of the carriages was a joyful sight ; and even the bustle of collecting and preparing to depart, and the solicitude of Mrs. Elton to have *her* carriage first, were gladly endured, in the prospect of the quiet drive home which was to close the very questionable enjoyments of this day of pleasure. Such another scheme, composed of so many ill-assorted people, she hoped never to be betrayed into again.

While waiting for the carriage, she found Mr. Knightley by her side. He looked around, as if to see that no one were near, and then said—

“ Emma, I must once more speak to you as I have been used to do ; a privilege rather endured than allowed, perhaps, but I must still use it. I cannot see you acting wrong, without a remonstrance. How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates ? How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation ? Emma, I had not thought it possible.”

Emma recollected, blushed, was sorry, but tried to laugh it off.

“ Nay, how could I help saying what I did ? Nobody could have helped it. It was not so very bad. I dare say she did not understand me.”

“ I assure you she did. She felt your full meaning.

She has talked of it since. I wish you could have heard how she talked of it—with what candour and generosity. I wish you could have heard her honouring your forbearance, in being able to pay her such attentions, as she was for ever receiving from yourself and your father, when her society must be so irksome.”

“ Oh ! ” cried Emma, “ I know there is not a better creature in the world ; but you must allow, that what is good and what is ridiculous are most unfortunately blended in her.”

“ They are blended,” said he, “ I acknowledge ; and, were she prosperous, I could allow much for the occasional prevalence of the ridiculous over the good. Were she a woman of fortune, I would leave every harmless absurdity to take its chance ; I would not quarrel with you for any liberties of manner. Were she your equal in situation—but, Emma, consider how far this is from being the case. She is poor ; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to ; and if she live to old age must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion. It was badly done, indeed ! You, whom she had known from an infant, whom she had seen grow up from a period when her notice was an honour—to have you now, in thoughtless spirits, and the pride of the moment, laugh at her, humble her—and before her niece, too—and before others, many of whom (certainly *some*) would be entirely guided by *your* treatment of her. This is not pleasant to you, Emma—and it is very far from pleasant to me ; but I must, I will—I will tell you truths while I can ; satisfied with proving myself your friend by very faithful counsel, and trusting that you will some time or other do me greater justice than you can do now.”

While they talked they were advancing towards the carriage ; it was ready ; and, before she could speak again, he had handed her in. He had misinterpreted the feelings which had kept her face averted, and her tongue motionless. They were combined only of anger against herself, mortification, and deep concern. She had not been able to speak ; and, on entering the carriage, sunk back for a moment overcome ; then reproaching herself for having taken no leave, making no acknowledgment, parting in apparent sullenness, she looked out with voice and hand eager to show a difference ; but it was just too late. He had turned away, and the horses were in motion. She continued to look back, but in vain ; and soon, with what appeared unusual speed, they were half way down the hill, and everything left far behind. She was vexed beyond what could have been expressed—almost beyond what she could conceal. Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life. She was most forcibly struck. The truth if his representation there was no denying. She felt it at her heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates ! How could she have exposed herself to such ill opinion in any one she valued ! And how suffer him to leave her without saying one word of gratitude, of concurrence, of common kindness !

Time did not compose her. As she reflected more, she seemed but to feel it more. She never had been so depressed. Happily, it was not necessary to speak. There was only Harriet, who seemed not in spirits herself, fagged, and very willing to be silent ; and Emma felt the tears running down her cheeks almost all the way home, without being at any trouble to check them, extraordinary as they were.

Emma and Mr. Knightley

[To her own and every one else's surprise, Emma decides to marry Mr. Knightley.]

Mrs. Weston's friends were all made happy by her safety ; and if the satisfaction of her well-doing could be increased to Emma, it was by knowing her to be the mother of a little girl. She had been decided in wishing for a Miss Weston. She would not acknowledge that it was with any view of making a match for her, hereafter, with either of Isabella's sons ; but she was convinced that a daughter would suit both father and mother best. It would be a great comfort to Mr. Weston, as he grew older—and even Mrs. Weston might be growing older ten years hence—to have his fireside enlivened by the sports and the nonsense, the freaks and the fancies of a child never banished from home ; and Mrs. Weston—no one could doubt that a daughter would be most to her ; and it would be quite a pity that any one who so well knew how to teach, should not have their powers in exercise again.

“ She has had the advantage, you know, of practising on me,” she continued—“ like La Baronne d'Almane on La Comtesse d'Ostalis, in Madame de Genlis' ‘ Adelaide and Theodore,’ and we shall now see her own little Adelaide educated on a more perfect plan.”

“ That is,” replied Mr. Knightley, “ she will indulge her even more than she did you, and believe that she does not indulge her at all. It will be the only difference.”

“ Poor child ! ” cried Emma ; “ at that rate, what will become of her ? ”

" Nothing very bad The fate of thousands. She will be disagreeable in infancy, and correct herself as she grows older. I am losing all my bitterness against spoilt children, my dearest Emma. I, who am owing all my happiness to *you*, would not it be horrible ingratitude in me to be severe on them ? "

Emma laughed, and replied: " But I had the assistance of all your endeavours to counteract the indulgence of other people. I doubt whether my own sense would have corrected me without it."

" Do you ?—I have no doubt. Nature gave you understanding :—Miss Taylor gave you principles. You must have done well. My interference was quite as likely to do harm as good. It was very natural for you to say, ' What right has he to lecture me ? ' and I am afraid very natural for you to feel that it was done in a disagreeable manner. I do not believe I did you any good. The good was all to myself, by making you an object of the tenderest affection to me. I could not think about you so much without doating on you, faults and all ; and by dint of fancying so many errors, have been in love with you ever since you were thirteen at least."

" I am sure you were of use to me," cried Emma. " I was very often influenced rightly by you—oftener than I would own at the time. I am very sure you did me good. And if poor little Anna Weston is to be spoiled, it will be the greatest humanity in you to do as much for her as you have done for me, except falling in love with her when she is thirteen."

" How often, when you were a girl, have you said to me, with one of your saucy looks—' Mr. Knightley, I am going to do so-and-so ; papa says I may,' or ' I have Miss Taylor's leave '—something which, you knew, I did not approve. In such cases my

interference was giving you two bad feelings instead of one."

"What an amiable creature I was!, No wonder you should hold my speeches in such affectionate remembrance."

" 'Mr. Knightley,' you always called me 'Mr. Knightley'; and, from habit, it has not so very formal a sound. And yet it is formal. I want you to call me something else, but I do not know what."

"I remember once calling you 'George,' in one of my amiable fits, about ten years ago. I did it because I thought it would offend you; but, as you made no objection, I never did it again."

"And cannot you call me 'George' now?"

"Impossible! I never can call you anything but 'Mr. Knightley.' I will not promise even to equal the elegant terseness of Mrs. Elton, by calling you Mr. K. But I will promise," she added presently, laughing and blushing, "I will promise to call you once by your Christian name. I do not say when, but perhaps you may guess where;—in the building in which N. takes M. for better, for worse."

Emma grieved that she could not be more openly just to one important service which his better sense would have rendered her, to the advice which would have saved her from the worst of all her womanly follies—her wilful intimacy with Harriet Smith; but it was too tender a subject. She could not enter on it. Harriet was very seldom mentioned between them. This, on his side, might merely proceed from her not being thought of; but Emma was rather inclined to attribute it to delicacy, and a suspicion, from some appearances, that their friendship were declining. She was aware herself that, parting under any other circumstances, they certainly should have

corresponded more, and that her intelligence would not have rested, as it now almost wholly did, on Isabella's letters. He might observe that it was so. The pain of being obliged to practice concealment towards him was very little inferior to the pain of having made Harriet unhappy.

Isabella sent quite as good an account of her visitor as could be expected ; on her first arrival she had thought her out of spirits, which appeared perfectly natural, as there was a dentist to be consulted ; but since that business had been over, she did not appear to find Harriet different from what she had known her before. Isabella, to be sure, was no very quick observer ; yet if Harriet had not been equal to playing with the children, it would not have escaped her. Emma's comforts and hopes were most agreeably carried on, by Harriet's being to stay longer, her fortnight was likely to be a month at least. Mr. and Mrs. John Knightley were to come down in August, and she was invited to remain till they could bring her back.

"John does not even mention your friend," said Mr. Knightley. "Here is his answer, if you like to see it." It was the answer to the communication of his intended marriage. Emma accepted it with a very eager hand, with an impatience all alive to know what he would say about it, and not at all checked by hearing that her friend was unmentioned.

"John enters like a brother into my happiness," continued Mr. Knightley, "but he is no complimenter ; and though I well know him to have, likewise, a most brotherly affection for you, he is so far from making flourishes, that any other young woman might think him rather cool in her praise. But I am not afraid of your seeing what he writes."

“ He writes like a sensible man,” replied Emma, when she had read the letter. “ I honour his sincerity. It is very plain that he considers the good fortune of the engagement as all on my side, but that he is not without hope of my growing, in time, worthy of your affection as you think me already. Had he said anything to bear a different construction, I should not have believed him.”

“ My Emma, he means no such thing. He only means——”

“ He and I should differ very little in our estimation of the two ”—interrupted she, with a sort of serious smile—“ much less, perhaps, than he is aware of, if we could enter without ceremony or reserve on the subject.”

“ Emma, my dear Emma——”

“ Oh ! ” she cried, with more thorough gaiety, “ if you fancy your brother does not do me justice, only wait till my dear father is in the secret, and hear his opinion. Depend upon it, he will be much farther from doing *you* justice. He will think all the happiness, all the advantage, on your side of the question ; all the merit on mine. I wish I may not sink into ‘ poor Emma ’ with him at once. His tender compassion towards oppressed worth can go no farther.”

“ Ah ! ” he cried, “ I wish your father might be half as easily convinced as John will be, of our having every right that equal worth can give, to be happy together. I am amused by one part of John’s letter—did you notice it ?—where he says that my information did not take him wholly by surprise, that he was rather in expectation of hearing something of the kind.”

“ If I understand your brother, he only means so far as your having some thoughts of marrying. He

had no idea of me. He seems perfectly unprepared for that."

"Yes, yes—but I am amused that he should have seen so far into my feelings. What has he been judging by? I am not conscious of any difference in my spirits or conversation that could prepare him at this time for my marrying any more than at another. But it was so, I suppose. I dare say there was a difference when I was staying with them the other day. I believe I did not play with the children quite so much as usual. I remember one evening the poor boys saying, 'Uncle seems always tired now.'"

The time was coming when the news must spread farther, and other persons' reception of it tried. As soon as Mrs. Weston was sufficiently recovered to admit Mr. Woodhouse's visits, Emma having it in view that her gentle reasonings should be employed in the cause, resolved first to announce it at home, and then at Randalls. But how to break it to her father at last! She had bound herself to do it, in such an hour of Mr. Knightley's absence, or when it came to the point her heart would have failed her, and she must have put it off; but Mr. Knightley was to come at such a time, and follow up the beginning she was to make. She was forced to speak, and to speak cheerfully too. She must not make it a more decided subject of misery to him, by a melancholy tone herself. She must not appear to think it a misfortune. With all the spirits she could command, she prepared him first for something strange, and then, in a few words, said, that if his consent and approbation could be obtained—which, she trusted, would be attended with no difficulty, since it was a plan to promote the happiness of all—she and Mr. Knightley meant to marry; by which means Hartfield would

receive the constant addition of that person's company whom she knew he loved, next to his daughters and Mrs. Weston, best in the world.

Poor man!—it was at first a considerable shock to him, and he tried earnestly to dissuade her from it. She was reminded, more than once, of having always said she would never marry, and assured that it would be a great deal better for her to remain single; and told of poor Isabella, and poor Miss Taylor. But it would not do. Emma hung about him affectionately, and smiled, and said it must be so; and that he must not class her with Isabella and Mrs. Weston, whose marriages taking them from Hartfield had, indeed, made a melancholy change: but she was not going from Hartfield; she should be always there; she was introducing no change in their numbers or their comforts but for the better; and she was very sure that he would be a great deal the happier for having Mr. Knightley always at hand, when he were once got used to the idea. Did he not love Mr. Knightley very much? He would not deny that he did, she was sure. Whom did he ever want to consult on business but Mr. Knightley? Who was so useful to him, who so ready to write his letters, who so glad to assist him? Who so cheerful, so attentive, so attached to him? Would not he like to have him always on the spot? Yes. That was all very true. Mr. Knightley could not be there too often; he should be glad to see him every day; but they did see him every day as it was. Why could not they go on as they had done?

Mr. Woodhouse could not be soon reconciled; but the worst was overcome, the idea was given; time and continual repetition must do the rest. To Emma's entreaties and assurances succeeded Mr.

Knightley's, whose fond praise of her gave the subject even a kind of welcome ; and he was soon used to be talked to by each on every fair occasion. They had all the assistance which Isabella could give, by letters of the strongest approbation ; and Mrs. Weston was ready, on the first meeting, to consider the subject in the most serviceable light ; first as a settled, and, secondly, as a good one—well aware of the nearly equal importance of the two recommendations to Mr. Woodhouse's mind. It was agreed upon, as what was to be ; and everybody by whom he was used to be guided assuring him that it would be for his happiness, and having some feelings himself which almost admitted it, he began to think that some time or other, in another year or two, perhaps, it might not be so very bad if the marriage did take place.

Mrs. Weston was acting no part, feigning no feelings in all that she said to him in favour of the event. She had been extremely surprised, never more so, than when Emma first opened the affair to her ; but she saw in it only increase of happiness to all, and had no scruple in urging him to the utmost. She had such a regard for Mr. Knightley, as to think he deserved even her dearest Emma ; and it was in every respect so proper, suitable, and unexceptionable a connection, and in one respect, one point of the highest importance, so peculiarly eligible, so singularly fortunate, that now it seemed as if Emma could not safely have attached herself to any other creature, and that she had herself been the stupidest of beings in not having thought of it, and wished it long ago. How very few of those men in a rank of life to address Emma would have renounced their own home for Hartfield ! And who but Mr. Knightley

could know and bear with Mr. Woodhouse, so as to make such an arrangement desirable ! The difficulty of disposing of Mr. Woodhouse had been always felt in her husband's plans and her own, for a marriage between Frank and Emma. How to settle the claims of Enscombe and Hartfield had been a continual impediment—less acknowledged by Mr. Weston than by herself—but even he had never been able to finish the subject better than by saying—"Those matters will take care of themselves ; the young people will find a way." But here there was nothing to be shifted off in a wild speculation on the future. It was all right, all open, all equal. No sacrifice on any side worth the name. It was a union of the highest promise of felicity in itself, and without one real, rational difficulty to oppose or delay it.

Mrs. Weston, with her baby on her knee, indulging in such reflections as these, was one of the happiest women in the world. If anything could increase her delight, it was perceiving that the baby would soon have outgrown its first set of caps.

The news was universally a surprise wherever it spread ; and Mr. Weston had his five minutes' share of it ; but five minutes were enough to familiarise the idea to his quickness of mind. He saw the advantages of the match, and rejoiced in them with all the constancy of his wife ; but the wonder of it was very soon nothing ; and by the end of an hour he was not far from believing that he had always foreseen it.

"It is to be a secret, I conclude," said he. "These matters are always a secret, till it is found out that everybody knows them. Only let me be told when I may speak out. I wonder whether Jane has any suspicion ?"

He went to Highbury the next morning, and satisfied himself on that point. He told her the news. Was not she like a daughter, his eldest daughter?—he must tell her; and Miss Bates being present, it passed, of course, to Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Perry, and Mrs. Elton, immediately afterwards. It was no more than the principals were prepared for; they had calculated from the time of its being known at Randalls how soon it would be over Highbury; and were thinking of themselves, as the evening wonder in many a family circle, with great sagacity.

In general, it was a very well approved match. Some might think him, and others might think her, the most in luck. One set might recommend their all removing to Donwell, and leaving Hartfield for the John Knightleys; and another might predict disagreements among their servants; but yet, upon the whole, there was no serious objection raised, except in one habitation—the Vicarage. There, the surprise was not softened by any satisfaction. Mr. Elton cared little about it, compared with his wife; he only hoped “the young lady’s pride would now be contented”; and supposed “she had always meant to catch Knightley if she could”; and, on the point of living at Hartfield, could daringly exclaim, “Rather he than I!” But Mrs. Elton was very much discomposed indeed. “Poor Knightley! poor fellow!—sad business for him. She was extremely concerned; for though very eccentric, he had a thousand good qualities. How could he be so taken in? Did not think him at all in love—not in the least. Poor Knightley! There would be an end of all pleasant intercourse with him. How happy he had been to come and dine with them whenever they asked him! But that would be all over now. Poor

fellow ! No more exploring parties to Donwell made for *her*. Oh no ; there would be a Mrs. Knightley to throw cold water on everything. Extremely disagreeable ; but she was not at all sorry that she had abused the housekeeper the other day. Shocking plan, living together. It would never do. She knew a family near Maple Grove who had tried it, and been obliged to separate before the end of the first quarter."

Two Weddings

[Emma's successive failures in finding a husband for Harriet Smith are followed by the girl's engagement to her first admirer, Robert Martin.]

If Emma had still, at intervals, an anxious feeling for Harriet, a momentary doubt of its being possible for her to be really cured of her attachment to Mr. Knightley, and really able to accept another man from unbiassed inclination, it was not long that she had to suffer from the recurrence of any such uncertainty. A very few days brought the party from London ; and she had no sooner an opportunity of being one hour alone with Harriet, than she became perfectly satisfied, unaccountable as it was, that Robert Martin had thoroughly supplanted Mr. Knightley ; and was now forming all her views of happiness.

Harriet was a little distressed—did look a little foolish at first ; but having once owned that she had been presumptuous and silly, and self-deceived before, her pain and confusion seemed to die away with the words, and leave her without a care for the past, and with the fullest exultation in the present and future ; for as to her friend's approbation, Emma had

instantly removed every fear of that nature, by meeting her with the most unqualified congratulations. Harriet was most happy to give every particular of the evening at Astley's, and the dinner the next day ; she could dwell on it all with the utmost delight. But what did such particulars explain ? The fact was, as Emma could now acknowledge, that Harriet had always liked Robert Martin ; and that his continuing to love her had been irresistible. Beyond this, it must ever be unintelligible to Emma.

The event, however, was most joyful ; and every day was giving her fresh reason for thinking so. Harriet's parentage became known. She proved to be the daughter of a tradesman, rich enough to afford her the comfortable maintenance which had ever been hers, and decent enough to have always wished for concealment. Such was the blood of gentility which Emma had formerly been so ready to vouch for ! It was likely to be as untainted, perhaps, as the blood of many a gentleman : but what a connection had she been preparing for Mr. Knightley, or for the Churchills, or even for Mr. Elton ! The stain of illegitimacy, unbleached by nobility or wealth, would have been a stain indeed.

No objection was raised on the father's side ; the young man was treated liberally ; it was all as it should be ; and as Emma became acquainted with Robert Martin, who was now introduced to Hartfield, she fully acknowledged in him all the appearance of sense and worth which could bid fairest for her little friend. She had no doubt of Harriet's happiness with any good-tempered man ; but with him, and in the home he offered, there would be the hope of more, of security, stability, and improvement. She would be placed in the midst of those who loved her, and who

had better sense than herself ; retired enough for safety, and occupied enough for cheerfulness. She would be never led into temptation, nor left for it to find her out. She would be respectable and happy ; and Emma admitted her to be the luckiest creature in the world, to have created so steady and persevering an affection in such a man ; or, if not quite the luckiest, to yield only to herself.

Harriet, necessarily drawn away by her engagements with the Martins, was less and less at Hartfield, which was not to be regretted. The intimacy between her and Emma must sink ; their friendship must change into a calmer sort of good-will ; and, fortunately, what ought to be, and must be, seemed already beginning, and in the most gradual, natural manner.

Before the end of September, Emma attended Harriet to church, and saw her hand bestowed on Robert Martin with so complete a satisfaction, as no remembrances, even connected with Mr. Elton as he stood before them, could impair. Perhaps indeed, at that time, she scarcely saw Mr. Elton, but as the clergyman whose blessing at the altar might next fall on herself. Robert Martin and Harriet Smith, the latest couple engaged of the three, were the first to be married.

Jane Fairfax had already quitted Highbury, and was restored to the comforts of her beloved home with the Campbells. The Mr. Churchills were also in town ; and they were only waiting for November.

The intermediate month was the one fixed on, as far as they dared, by Emma and Mr. Knightley. They had determined that their marriage ought to be concluded, while John and Isabella were still at Hartfield, to allow them the fortnight's absence in a tour to the sea-side, which was the plan. John and

Isabella, and every other friend, were agreed in approving it. But Mr. Woodhouse—how was Mr. Woodhouse to be induced to consent?—he, who had never yet alluded to their marriage but as a distant event.

When first sounded on the subject, he was so miserable that they were almost hopeless. A second allusion, indeed, gave less pain. He began to think it was to be, and that he could not prevent it—a very promising step of the mind on its way to resignation. Still, however, he was not happy. Nay, he appeared so much otherwise that his daughter's courage failed. She could not bear to see him suffering; to know him fancying himself neglected; and though her understanding almost acquiesced in the assurance of both the Mr. Knightleys, that when once the event were over, his distress would be soon over too, she hesitated—she could not proceed.

In this state of suspense, they were befriended, not by any sudden illumination of Mr. Woodhouse's mind, or any wonderful change of his nervous system, but by the operation of the same system in another way. Mrs. Weston's poultry-house was robbed one night of all her turkeys—evidently by the ingenuity of man. Other poultry-yards in the neighbourhood also suffered. Pilfering was *house-breaking* to Mr. Woodhouse's fears. He was very uneasy; and but for the sense of his son-in-law's protection, would have been under wretched alarm every night of his life. The strength, resolution, and presence of mind of the Mr. Knightleys commanded his fullest dependence. While either of them protected him and his, Hartfield was safe. But Mr. John Knightley must be in London again by the end of the first week in November.

The result of this distress, was, that, with a much

more voluntary, cheerful consent than his daughter had ever presumed to hope for at the moment, she was able to fix her wedding-day ; and Mr. Elton was called on, within a month from the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Martin, to join the hands of Mr. Knightley and Miss Woodhouse.

The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery or parade ; and Mrs. Elton, from the particulars detailed by her husband, thought it all extremely shabby, and very inferior to her own. “ Very little white satin, very few lace veils ; a most pitiful business ! Selina would stare when she heard of it.” But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union.

Sense and Sensibility

The Dashwood Family

[The circumstances of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the sister heroines of the novel, are here described.]

THE family of Dashwood had been long settled in Sussex. The estate was large, and their residence was Norland Park, in the centre of their property, where, for many generations, they had lived in so respectable a manner as to engage the general good opinion of their surrounding acquaintance. The late owner of this estate was a single man, who lived to a very advanced age, and who for many years of his life had a constant companion and housekeeper in his sister. But her death, which happened ten years before his own, produced a great alteration in his home ; for to supply her loss he invited and received into his house the family of his nephew Mr. Henry Dashwood, the legal inheritor of the Norland estate, and the person to whom he intended to bequeath it. In the society of his nephew and niece, and their children, the old gentleman's days were comfortably spent. His attachment to them all increased. The constant attention of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood to his wishes, which proceeded not merely from interest, but from goodness of heart, gave him every degree of solid comfort which his age could receive ; and the cheerfulness of the children added a relish to his existence.

By a former marriage, Mr. Henry Dashwood had one son ; by his present lady three daughters. The son, a steady, respectable young man, was amply provided for by the fortune of his mother, which had been large, and half of which devolved on him on his coming of age. By his own marriage, likewise, which happened soon afterwards, he added to his wealth. To him, therefore, the succession to the Norland estate was not so really important as to his sisters ; for their fortune, independent of what might arise to them from their father's inheriting that property, could be but small. Their mother had nothing, and their father only seven thousand pounds in his own disposal ; for the remaining moiety of his first wife's fortune was also secured to her child, and he had only a life-interest in it.

The old gentleman died : his will was read ; and, like almost every other will, gave as much disappointment as pleasure. He was neither so unjust nor so ungrateful as to leave his estate from his nephew, but he left it to him on such terms as destroyed half the value of the bequest. Mr. Dashwood had wished for it more for the sake of his wife and daughters than for himself or his son ; but to his son, and his son's son, a child of four years old, it was secured, in such a way as to leave to himself no power of providing for those who were most dear to him, and who most needed a provision, by any charge on the estate, or by any sale of its valuable woods. The whole was tied up for the benefit of this child, who, in occasional visits with his father and mother at Norland, had so far gained on the affections of his uncle by such attractions as are by no means unusual in children of two or three years old—an imperfect articulation, an earnest desire of having his own way, many

cunning tricks, and a great deal of noise—as to outweigh all the value of all the attention which for years he had received from his niece and her daughters. He meant not to be unkind, however, and as a mark of affection for the three girls, he left them a thousand pounds apiece.

Mr. Dashwood's disappointment was, at first severe; but his temper was cheerful and sanguine; and he might reasonably hope to live many years, and, by living economically, lay by a considerable sum from the produce of an estate already large, and capable of almost immediate improvement. But the fortune, which had been so tardy in coming, was his only one twelvemonth. He survived his uncle no longer; and ten thousand pounds, including the late legacies, was all that remained for his widow and daughters.

His son was sent for as soon as his danger was known, and to him Mr. Dashwood recommended, with all the strength and urgency which illness could command, the interest of his mother-in-law and sisters.

Mr. John Dashwood had not the strong feelings of the rest of the family; but he was affected by a recommendation of such a nature at such a time, and he promised to do everything in his power to make them comfortable. His father was rendered easy by such an assurance, and Mr. John Dashwood had then leisure to consider how much there might prudently be in his power to do for them.

He was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather cold-hearted and rather selfish is to be ill-disposed; but he was, in general, well-respected, for he conducted himself with propriety in the discharge of his ordinary duties. Had he married a more amiable woman, he might have been made still

more respectable than he was—he might even have been made amiable himself ; for he was very young when he married, and very fond of his wife. But Mrs. John Dashwood was a strong caricature of himself—more narrow-minded and selfish.

When he gave his promise to his father, he meditated within himself to increase the fortunes of his sisters by the present of a thousand pounds apiece. He then really thought himself equal to it. The prospect of four thousand a year, in addition to his present income, besides the remaining half of his own mother's fortune, warmed his heart, and made him feel capable of generosity. " Yes, he would give them three thousand pounds. It would be liberal and handsome. It would be enough to make them completely easy. Three thousand pounds ! He could spare so considerable a sum with little inconvenience." He thought of it all day long and for many days successively, and he did not repent.

No sooner was his father's funeral over than Mrs. John Dashwood, without sending any notice of her intention to her mother-in-law, arrived with her child and their attendants. No one could dispute her right to come—the house was her husband's from the moment of his father's decease ; but the indelicacy of her conduct was so much the greater, and, to a woman in Mrs. Dashwood's situation, with only common feelings, must have been highly displeasing. But in *her* mind there was a sense of honour so keen, a generosity so romantic, that any offence of the kind, by whomsoever given or received, was to her a source of immovable disgust. Mrs. John Dashwood had never been a favourite with any of her husband's family ; but she had had no opportunity, till the present, of showing them with how little attention

to the comfort of other people she could act, when occasion required it.

So acutely did Mrs. Dashwood feel this ungracious behaviour, and so earnestly did she despise her daughter-in-law for it, that on the arrival of the latter, she would have quitted the house for ever, had not the entreaty of her eldest girl induced her first to reflect on the propriety of going, and her own tender love for all her three children determined her afterwards to stay, and for their sakes avoid a breach with their brother.

Elinor, the eldest daughter whose advice was so effectual, possessed a strength of understanding and coolness of judgment which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally have led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart; her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong, but she knew how to govern them. It was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn, and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught.

Marianne's abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor's. She was sensible and clever, but eager in everything: her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting; she was everything but prudent. The resemblance between her and her mother was strikingly great.

Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister's sensibility; but by Mrs. Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which

overpowered them at first was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted ; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. She could consult with her brother, could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival, and treat her with proper attention, and could strive to rouse her mother to similar exertion, and encourage her to similar forbearance.

Margaret, the other sister, was a good-humoured, well-disposed girl ; but as she had already imbibed a good deal of Marianne's romance, without having much of her sense, she did not, at thirteen, bid fair to equal her sisters at a more advanced period of life.

A Compromise

[Although persuaded by his wife to ignore his father's last wishes, Mr. John Dashwood endeavours to carry them out sufficiently to keep his conscience easy.]

Mrs. John Dashwood now installed herself mistress of Norland ; and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors. As such, however, they were treated by her with quiet civility ; and by her husband with as much kindness as he could feel towards anybody beyond himself, his wife, and their child. He really pressed them, with some earnestness, to consider Norland as their home ; and as no plan appeared so eligible to Mrs. Dashwood as remaining there till she could accommodate herself

with a house in the neighbourhood, his invitation was accepted.

A continuance in a place where everything reminded her of former delight was exactly what suited her mind. In seasons of cheerfulness, no temper could be more cheerful than hers, or possess, in a greater degree, that sanguine expectation of happiness which is happiness itself. But in sorrow she must be equally carried away by her fancy, and as far beyond consolation as in pleasure she was beyond alloy.

Mrs. John Dashwood did not at all approve of what her husband intended to do for his sisters. To take three thousand pounds from the fortune of their dear little boy would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. She begged him to think again on the subject. How could he answer it to himself to rob his child, and his only child too, of so large a sum? And what possible claim could the Miss Dashwoods, who were related to him only by half blood, which she considered as no relationship at all, have on his generosity to so large an amount? It was very well known that no affection was ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages; and why was he to ruin himself, and their poor little Harry, by giving away all his money to his half-sisters?

"It was my father's last bequest to me," replied her husband, "that I should assist his widow and daughters."

"He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child."

"He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my

dear Fanny ; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But as he required the promise, I could not do less than give it—at least I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home.”

“ Well, then, let something be done for them ; but that something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider,” she added, “ that when the money is once parted with, it can never return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever. If, indeed, it could ever be restored to our poor little boy——”

“ Why, to be sure,” said her husband, very gravely, “ that would make a great difference. The time may come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition.”

“ To be sure it would.”

“ Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half. Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes ! ”

“ Oh ! beyond anything great ! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if *really* his sisters. And as it is—only half blood ! But you have such a generous spirit ! ”

“ I would not wish to do anything mean,” he replied. “ One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can

think I have not done enough for them : even themselves, they can hardly expect more."

"There is no knowing what *they* may expect," said the lady ; "but we are not to think of their expectations : the question is, what you can afford to do."

"Certainly ; and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds apiece. As it is, without any addition of mine they will each have above three thousand pounds on their mother's death—a very comfortable fortune for any young woman."

"To be sure it is ; and, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry, they will be sure of doing well ; and if they do not, they may all live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds."

"That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives, rather than for them—something of the annuity kind, I mean. My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable."

His wife hesitated a little, however, in giving her consent to this plan.

"To be sure," said she, "it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years, we shall be completely taken in."

"Fifteen years, my dear Fanny ! Her life cannot be worth half that purchase."

"Certainly not ; but if you observe, people always live for ever when there is any annuity to be paid them ; and she is very stout and healthy, and

hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business ; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of annuities ; for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid ; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them ; and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not her own, she said, with such perpetual claims on it ; and it was the more unkind in my father, because, otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal, without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world."

"It is certainly an unpleasant thing," replied Mr. Dashwood, "to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is *not* one's own. To be tied down to the regular payment of such a sum, on every rent-day, is by no means desirable : it takes away one's independence."

"Undoubtedly ; and, after all, you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure ; you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a hundred, or even fifty pounds, from your own expenses."

"I believe you are right, my love ; it will be

better that there should be no annuity in the case. Whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds now and then will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father."

"To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you ; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing further ; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year apiece, and of course they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether, they will have five hundred a year amongst them ; and what on earth can four women want for more than that ? They will live so cheap ! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants ; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind. Only conceive how comfortable they will be ! Five

hundred a year ! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it ; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give *you* something."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Dashwood, "I believe you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my mother removes into another house, my services shall be readily given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture, too, may be acceptable then."

"Certainly," returned Mrs. John Dashwood. "But, however, *one* thing must be considered. When your father and mother moved to Norland, though the furniture of Stanhill was sold, all the china, plate, and linen was saved, and is now left to your mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it."

"That is a material consideration undoubtedly, a valuable legacy indeed ! And yet some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our own stock here."

"Yes ; and the set of breakfast-china is twice as handsome as what belongs to this house ; a great deal too handsome in my opinion, for any place *they* can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is. Your father thought only of *them*. And I must say this, that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes ; for we very well know that if he could he would have left almost everything in the world to *them*."

This argument was irresistible. It gave to his

intentions whatever of decision was wanting before ; and he finally resolved that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife pointed out.

Marianne reproves Sir John Middleton

[The handsome Willoughby, a stranger to the Dashwoods, has assisted Marianne to her home after she has sprained her ankle on the hillside. She is eager to know something about her "preserver."]

Sir John called on them as soon as the next interval of fair weather that morning allowed him to get out of doors ; and Marianne's accident being related to him, he was eagerly asked whether he knew any gentleman of the name of Willoughby at Allenham.

"Willoughby !" cried Sir John ; " what ! is *he* in the country ? That is good news, however. I will ride over to-morrow, and ask him to dinner on Thursday."

" You know him, then," said Mrs. Dashwood.

" Know him ! to be sure I do. Why, he is down here every year."

" And what sort of a young man is he ? "

" As good a kind of fellow as ever lived, I assure you. A very decent shot, and there is not a bolder rider in England."

" And is *that* all you can say for him ? " cried Marianne indignantly. " But what are his manners on more intimate acquaintance ? what his pursuits, his talents, and genius ? "

Sir John was rather puzzled.

"Upon my soul," said he, "I do not know much about him as to all *that*. But he is a pleasant, good-humoured fellow, and has got the nicest little black bitch of a pointer I ever saw. Was she out with him to-day?"

But Marianne could no more satisfy him as to the colour of Mr. Willoughby's pointer than he could describe to her the shades of his mind.

"But who is he?" said Elinor. "Where does he come from? Has he a house at Allenham?"

On this point Sir John could give more certain intelligence, and he told them that Mr. Willoughby had no property of his own in the country; that he resided there only while he was visiting the old lady at Allenham Court, to whom he was related, and whose possessions he was to inherit; adding, "Yes, yes, he is very well worth catching, I can tell you, Miss Dashwood; he has a pretty little estate of his own, in Somersetshire, besides; and if I were you, I would not give him up to my younger sister, in spite of all this tumbling down hills. Miss Marianne must not expect to have all the men to herself. Brandon will be jealous, if she does not take care."

"I do not believe," said Mrs. Dashwood, with a good-humoured smile, "that Mr. Willoughby will be incommoded by the attempts of either of *my* daughters towards what you call *catching him*. It is not an employment to which they have been brought up. Men are very safe with us, let them be ever so rich. I am glad to find, however, from what you say, that he is a respectable young man, and one whose acquaintance will not be ineligible."

"He is as good a sort of fellow, I believe, as ever lived," repeated Sir John. "I remember last

Christmas, at a little hop at the Park, he danced from eight o'clock till four without once sitting down."

"Did he, indeed?" cried Marianne, with sparkling eyes; "and with elegance, with spirit?"

"Yes; and he was up again at eight to ride to covert."

"That is what I like; that is what a young man ought to be. Whatever be his pursuits, his eagerness in them should know no moderation, and leave him no sense of fatigue."

"Ay, ay, I see how it will be," said Sir John—"I see how it will be. You will be setting your cap at him now, and never think of poor Brandon."

"That is an expression, Sir John," said Marianne warmly, "which I particularly dislike. I abhor every commonplace phrase by which wit is intended; and 'setting one's cap at a man,' or 'making a conquest,' are the most odious of all. Their tendency is gross and illiberal; and if their construction could ever be deemed clever, time has long ago destroyed all its ingenuity."

Sir John did not much understand this reproof; but he laughed as heartily as if he did, and then replied,—

"Ay, you will make conquests enough, I dare say, one way or other. Poor Brandon! he is quite smitten already; and he is very well worth setting your cap at, I can tell you, in spite of all this tumbling about and spraining of ankles."

A Morning Call

[The Squire and his wife, with his mother-in-law and other of his relatives, come to call on the Dashwoods at their cottage.]

From a reverie of this kind, as Elinor sat at her drawing table, she was roused one morning, soon after Edward's leaving them, by the arrival of company. She happened to be quite alone. The closing of the little gate, at the entrance of the green court in front of the house, drew his eyes to the window, and she saw a large party walking up to the door. Amongst them were Sir John and Lady Middleton and Mrs. Jennings, but there were two others, a gentleman and lady, who were quite unknown to her. She was sitting near the window; and as soon as Sir John perceived her, he left the rest of the party to the ceremony of knocking at the door, and stepping across the turf, obliged her to open the casement to speak to him, though the space was so short between the door and the window as to make it hardly possible to speak at one without being heard at the other.

"Well," said he, "we have brought you some strangers. How do you like them?"

"Hush! they will hear you."

"Never mind if they do. It is only the Palmers. Charlotte is very pretty, I can tell you. You may see her if you look this way."

As Elinor was certain of seeing her in a couple of minutes, without taking that liberty, she begged to be excused.

"Where is Marianne? Has she run away because we are come? I see her instrument is open."

“ She is walking, I believe.”

They were now joined by Mrs. Jennings, who had not patience enough to wait till the door was opened before she told *her* story. She came hallooing to the window, “ How do you do, my dear ? How does Mrs. Dashwood do ? And where are your sisters ? What ! all alone ? You will be glad of a little company to sit with you. I have brought my other son and daughter to see you. Only think of their coming so suddenly ! I thought I heard a carriage last night, while we were drinking our tea, but it never entered my head that it could be them. I thought of nothing but whether it might not be Colonel Brandon come back again ; so I said to Sir John, “ I do think I hear a carriage ; perhaps it is Colonel Brandon come back again——”

Elinor was obliged to turn from her, in the middle of her story, to receive the rest of the party. Lady Middleton introduced the two strangers, Mrs. Dashwood and Margaret came downstairs at the same time, and they all sat down to look at one another, while Mrs. Jennings continued her story as she walked through the passage into the parlour attended by Sir John.

Mrs. Palmer was several years younger than Lady Middleton, and totally unlike her in every respect. She was short and plump, had a very pretty face, and the finest expression of good-humour in it that could possibly be. Her manners were by no means so elegant as her sister's, but they were much more prepossessing. She came in with a smile, smiled all the time of her visit, except when she laughed, and smiled when she went away. Her husband was a grave-looking young man of five or six and twenty, with an air of more fashion and sense than his wife,

but of less willingness to please or be pleased. He entered the room with a look of self-consequence, slightly bowed to the ladies, without speaking a word, and after briefly surveying them and their apartments, took up a newspaper from the table, and continued to read it as long as he stayed.

Mrs. Palmer, on the contrary, who was strongly endowed by nature with a turn for being uniformly civil and happy, was hardly seated before her admiration of the parlour and everything in it burst forth.

“ Well, what a delightful room this is ! I never saw anything so charming ! Only think, mamma, how it is improved since I was here last !—I always thought it such a sweet place, ma’am ”—turning to Mrs. Dashwood—“ but you have made it so charming !—Only look, sister, how delightful everything is ! How I should like such a house for myself !—Should not you, Mr. Palmer ? ”

Mr. Palmer made her no answer, and did not even raise his eyes from the newspaper.

“ Mr. Palmer does not hear me,” said she, laughing ; “ he never does sometimes ; it is so ridiculous.”

This was quite a new idea to Mrs. Dashwood ; she had never been used to find wit in the inattention of any one, and could not help looking with surprise at them both.

Mrs. Jennings, in the meantime, talked on as loud as she could, and continued her account of their surprise, the evening before, on seeing their friends, without ceasing till everything was told. Mrs. Palmer laughed heartily at the recollection of their astonishment, and everybody agreed, two or three times over, that it had been quite an agreeable surprise.

"You may believe how glad we all were to see them," added Mrs. Jennings, leaning forward towards Elinor, and speaking in a low voice, as if she meant to be heard by no one else, though they were seated on different sides of the room; "but, however, I can't help wishing they had not travelled quite so fast, nor made such a long journey of it, for they came all round by London upon account of some business, for, you know"—nodding significantly and pointing to her daughter—"it was wrong in her situation. I wanted her to stay at home and rest this morning; but she would come with us—she longed so much to see you all."

Mrs. Palmer laughed, and said it would not do her any harm.

"She expects to be confined in February," continued Mrs. Jennings.

Lady Middleton could no longer endure such a conversation, and therefore exerted herself to ask Mr. Palmer if there was any news in the paper.

"No, none at all," he replied, and read on.

"Here comes Marianne," cried Sir John. "Now, Palmer, you shall see a monstrous pretty girl."

He immediately went into the passage, opened the front door, and ushered her in himself. Mrs. Jennings asked her, as soon as she appeared, if she had not been to Allenham; and Mrs. Palmer laughed so heartily at the question as to show she understood it. Mr. Palmer looked up on her entering the room, stared at her some minutes, and then returned to his newspaper. Mrs. Palmer's eye was now caught by the drawings which hung round the room. She got up to examine them.

"Oh dear, how beautiful these are! Well, how delightful! Do but look, mamma—how sweet!

I declare they are quite charming ; I could look at them for ever." And then sitting down again, she very soon forgot that there were any such things in the room.

When Lady Middleton rose to go away, Mr. Palmer rose also, laid down the newspaper, stretched himself, and looked at them all around.

" My love, have you been asleep ? " asked his wife, laughing.

He made her no answer ; and only observed, after again examining the room, that it was very low pitched and that the ceiling was crooked. He then made his bow, and departed with the rest.

Sir John had been very urgent with them all to spend the next day at the Park. Mrs. Dashwood, who did not choose to dine with them oftener than they dined at the cottage, absolutely refused on her own account ; her daughters might do as they pleased. But they had no curiosity to see how Mr. and Mrs. Palmer ate their dinner, and no expectation of pleasure from them in any other way. They attempted, therefore, likewise to excuse themselves. The weather was uncertain, and not likely to be good. But Sir John would not be satisfied. The carriage should be sent for them, and they must come. Lady Middleton, too, though she did not press their mother, pressed them. Mrs. Jennings and Mrs. Palmer joined their entreaties ; all seemed equally anxious to avoid a family party. And the young ladies were obliged to yield.

" Why should they ask us ? " said Marianne, as soon as they were gone. " The rent of this cottage is said to be low ; but we have had it on very hard terms if we are to dine at the Park whenever any one is staying either with them or with us."

“ They mean no less to be civil and kind to us now,” said Elinor, “ by these frequent invitations than by those which we received from them a few weeks ago. The alteration is not in them, if their parties are grown tedious and dull. We must look for the change elsewhere.”

The Call Returned

[Elinor and her sister go up to the Middletons' house to see the Palmers, and are invited to spend Christmas with them.]

As the Miss Dashwoods entered the drawing-room of the Park the next day at one door, Mrs. Palmer came running in at the other, looking as good-humoured and merry as before. She took them all most affectionately by the hand, and expressed great delight in seeing them again.

“ I am so glad to see you ! ” said she, seating herself between Elinor and Marianne ; “ for it is so bad a day, I was afraid you might not come, which would be a shocking thing, as we go away again to-morrow. We must go, for the Westons come to us next week, you know. It was quite a sudden thing our coming at all ; and I knew nothing of it till the carriage was coming to the door, and then Mr. Palmer asked me if I would go with him to Barton. He is so droll ! He never tells me anything ! I am so sorry we cannot stay longer ; however, we shall meet again in town very soon, I hope.”

They were obliged to put an end to such an expectation.

“ Not go to town ! ” cried Mrs. Palmer, with a

laugh ; “ I shall be quite disappointed if you do not. I could get the nicest house in the world for you, next door to ours in Hanover Square. You must come, indeed. I am sure I shall be very happy to chaperon you at any time till I am confined, if Mrs. Dashwood should not like to go into public.”

They thanked her, but were obliged to resist all her entreaties.

“ O my love,” cried Mrs. Palmer to her husband, who just then entered the room, “ you must help me to persuade the Miss Dashwoods to go to town this winter.”

Her love made no answer ; and after slightly bowing to the ladies, began complaining of the weather.

“ How horrid all this is ! ” said he. “ Such weather makes everything and everybody disgusting. Dullness is as much produced within doors as without by rain. It makes one detest all one’s acquaintance. What the devil does Sir John mean by not having a billiard-room in his house ? How few people know what comfort is ! Sir John is as stupid as the weather.”

The rest of the company soon dropped in.

“ I am afraid, Miss Marianne,” said Sir John, “ you have not been able to take your usual walk to Allenham to-day.”

Marianne looked very grave, and said nothing.

“ Oh, don’t be so sly before us,” said Mrs. Palmer, “ for we know all about it, I assure you ; and I admire your taste very much, for I think he is extremely handsome. We do not live a great way from him in the country, you know—not above ten miles, I dare say.”

“ Much nearer thirty,” said her husband.

“ Ah, well, there is not much difference. I never was at his house ; but they say it is a sweet, pretty place.”

“ As vile a spot as I ever saw in my life,” said Mr. Palmer.

Marianne remained perfectly silent, though her countenance betrayed her interest in what was said.

“ Is it very ugly ? ” continued Mrs. Palmer ; “ then it must be some other place that is so pretty, I suppose.”

When they were seated in the dining-room, Sir John observed with regret that they were only eight altogether.

“ My dear,” said he to his lady, “ it is very provoking that we should be so few. Why did you not ask the Gilberts to come to us to-day ? ”

“ Did not I tell you, Sir John, when you spoke to me about it before, that it could not be done ? They dined with us last.”

“ You and I, Sir John,” said Mrs. Jennings, “ should not stand upon such ceremony.”

“ Then you would be very ill-bred,” cried Mr. Palmer.

“ My love, you contradict everybody,” said his wife, with her usual laugh. “ Do you know that you are quite rude ? ”

“ I did not know I contradicted anybody in calling your mother ill-bred.”

“ Ay, you may abuse me as you please,” said the good-natured old lady ; “ you have taken Charlotte off my hands, and cannot give her back again. So there I have the whip-hand of you.”

Charlotte laughed heartily to think that her husband could not get rid of her, and exultingly said

she did not care how cross he was to her, as they must live together. It was impossible for any one to be more thoroughly good-natured, or more determined to be happy, than Mrs. Palmer. The studied indifference, insolence, and discontent of her husband, gave her no pain; and when he scolded or abused her she was highly diverted.

“Mr. Palmer is so droll!” said she in a whisper to Elinor. “He is always out of humour.”

Elinor was not inclined, after a little observation, to give him credit for being so genuinely and unaffectedly ill-natured or ill-bred as he wished to appear. His temper might, perhaps, be a little soured by finding, like many others of his sex, that through some unaccountable bias in favour of beauty, he was the husband of a very silly woman; but she knew that this kind of blunder was too common for any sensible man to be lastingly hurt by it. It was rather a wish of distinction, she believed, which produced his contemptuous treatment of everybody, and his general abuse of everything before him. It was the desire of appearing superior to other people. The motive was too common to be wondered at; but the means, however they might succeed by establishing his superiority in ill-breeding, were not likely to attach any one to him except his wife.

“O my dear Miss Dashwood,” said Mrs. Palmer soon afterwards. “I have got such a favour to ask of you and your sister. Will you come and spend some time at Cleveland this Christmas? Now, pray do; and come while the Westons are with us. You cannot think how happy I shall be! It will be quite delightful!—My love,” applying to her husband, “don’t you long to have the Miss Dashwoods come to Cleveland?”

"Certainly," he replied, with a sneer; "I came into Devonshire with no other view."

"There, now," said his lady; "you see Mr. Palmer expects you; so you cannot refuse to come."

They both eagerly and resolutely declined her invitation.

"But, indeed, you must and shall come. I am sure you will like it of all things. The Westons will be with us, and it will be quite delightful. You cannot think what a sweet place Cleveland is; and we are so gay now, for Mr. Palmer is always going about the country canvassing against the election, and so many people come to dine with us, that I never saw before; it is quite charming! But, poor fellow! it is very fatiguing to him, for he is forced to make everybody like him."

Elinor could hardly keep her countenance as she assented to the hardship of such an obligation.

"How charming it will be," said Charlotte, "when he is in Parliament!—won't it? How I shall laugh! It will be so ridiculous to see all his letters directed to him with an M.P. But do you know, he says he will never frank for me? He declares he won't.—Don't you, Mr. Palmer?"

Mr. Palmer took no notice of her.

"He cannot bear writing, you know," she continued; "he says it is quite shocking."

"No," said he, "I never said anything so irrational. Don't palm all your abuses of language upon me."

"There now; you see how droll he is. This is always the way with him. Sometimes he won't speak to me for half a day together, and then he comes out with something so droll—all about anything in the world."

She surprised Elinor very much, as they returned

into the drawing-room, by asking her whether she did not like Mr. Palmer excessively.

"Certainly," said Elinor; "he seems very agreeable."

"Well, I am so glad you do. I thought you would, he is so pleasant; and Mr. Palmer is excessively pleased with you and your sisters, I can tell you; and you can't think how disappointed he will be if you don't come to Cleveland. I can't imagine why you should object to it."

Elinor was again obliged to decline her invitation; and by changing the subject, put a stop to her entreaties. She thought it probable that as they lived in the same county Mrs. Palmer might be able to give some more particular account of Willoughby's general character than could be gathered from the Middletons' partial acquaintance with him; and she was eager to gain from any one such a confirmation of his merits as might remove the possibility of fear for Marianne. She began by inquiring if they saw much of Mr. Willoughby at Cleveland, and whether they were intimately acquainted with him.

"Oh dear, yes; I know him extremely well," replied Mrs. Palmer—"not that I ever spoke to him, indeed, but I have seen him for ever in town. Somehow or other I never happened to be staying at Barton while he was at Allenhurst; mamma saw him here once before, but I was with my uncle at Weymouth. However, I dare say we should have seen a great deal of him in Somersetshire, if it had not happened very unluckily that we should never have been in the country together. He is very little at Combe, I believe; but if he were ever so much there I do not think Mr. Palmer would visit him, for he is in the opposition, you know; and besides, it is such

a way off. I know why you inquire about him very well : your sister is to marry him. I am monstrous glad of it, for then I shall have her for a neighbour, you know."

"Upon my word," replied Elinor, "you know much more of the matter than I do, if you have any reason to expect such a match."

"Don't pretend to deny it, because you know it is what everybody talks of. I assure you I heard of it in my way through town."

"My dear Mrs. Palmer !"

"Upon my honour I did. I met Colonel Brandon Monday morning in Bond Street, just before we left town, and he told me of it directly."

"You surprise me very much. Colonel Brandon tell you of it? Surely you must be mistaken. To give such intelligence to a person who could not be interested in it, even if it were true, is not what I expect Colonel Brandon to do."

"But I do assure you it was so, for all that ; and I will tell you how it happened. When we met him, he turned back and walked with us ; and so we began talking of my brother and sister, and one thing and another, and I said to him, 'So, colonel, there is a new family come to Barton Cottage, I hear ; and mamma sends me word they are very pretty, and that one of them is going to be married to Mr. Willoughby of Combe Magna. Is it true, pray ? for, of course, you must know, as you have been in Devonshire so lately.'"

"And what did the colonel say ?"

"Oh, he did not say much, but he looked as if he knew it to be true ; so from that moment I set it down as certain. It will be quite delightful, I declare. When is it to take place ?"

“ Mr. Brandon was very well, I hope ? ”

“ Oh yes, quite well ; and so full of your praises, he did nothing but say fine things of you.”

“ I am flattered by his commendation. He seems an excellent man, and I think him uncommonly pleasing.”

“ So do I. He is such a charming man that it is quite a pity he should be so grave and so dull. Mamma says he was in love with your sister too. I assure you it was a great compliment if he was, for he hardly ever falls in love with anybody.”

“ Is Mr. Willoughby much known in your part of Somersetshire ? ” said Elinor.

“ Oh yes, extremely well ; that is, I do not believe many people are acquainted with him, because Combe Magna is so far off, but they all think him extremely agreeable, I assure you. Nobody is more liked than Mr. Willoughby, wherever he goes ; and so you may tell your sister. She is a monstrous lucky girl to get him, upon my honour—not but that he is much more lucky in getting her, because she is so very handsome and agreeable that nothing can be good enough for her. However, I don’t think her hardly at all handsomer than you, I assure you ; for I think you both excessively pretty, and so does Mr. Palmer too, I am sure, though we could not get him to own it last night.”

Mrs. Palmer’s information respecting Willoughby was not very material ; but any testimony in his favour, however small, was pleasing to her.

“ I am so glad we are got acquainted at last,” continued Charlotte. “ And now I hope we shall always be great friends. You can’t think how much I longed to see you. It is so delightful that you should live at the cottage ; nothing can be like it, to be

sure. And I am so glad your sister is going to be well married. I hope you will be a great deal at Combe Magna ; it is a sweet place, by all accounts."

"You have been long acquainted with Colonel Brandon, have not you ?"

"Yes, a great while ; ever since my sister married. He was a particular friend of Sir John's. I believe," she added, in a low voice, "he would have been very glad to have had me, if he could. Sir John and Lady Middleton wished it very much ; but mamma did not think the match good enough for me, otherwise Sir John would have mentioned it to the colonel, and we should have been married immediately."

"Did not Colonel Brandon know of Sir John's proposal to your mother before it was made ? Had he never owned his affection to yourself ?"

"Oh no ; but if mamma had not objected to it, I dare say he would have liked it of all things. He had not seen me then above twice, for it was before I left school. However, I am much happier as I am. Mr. Palmer is just the kind of man I like."

Fresh Arrivals at Barton Park

[*Sir John Middleton, who is always filling his house with new guests, invites the two Miss Steeles, whom he has met in Exeter, to stay at the Park.*]

THE Palmers returned to Cleveland the next day, and the two families at Barton were again left to entertain each other. But this did not last long; Elinor had hardly got their last visitors out of her head—had hardly done wondering at Charlotte's being so happy without a cause, at Mr. Palmer's acting so simply, with good abilities, and at the strange unsuitableness which often existed between husband and wife—before Sir John's and Mrs. Jennings's active zeal in the cause of society procured her some other new acquaintance to see and observe.

In a morning's excursion to Exeter they had met with two young ladies whom Mrs. Jennings had the satisfaction of discovering to be her relations, and this was enough for Sir John to invite them directly to the Park as soon as their present engagements at Exeter were over. Their engagements at Exeter instantly gave way before such an invitation; and Lady Middleton was thrown into no little alarm, on the return of Sir John, by hearing that she was very soon to receive a visit from two girls whom she had never seen in her life, and of whose elegance—whose tolerable gentility even—she could have no proof, for the assurances of her husband and mother on that subject went for nothing at all. Their being her relations, too, made it so much the worse; and Mrs. Jennings's attempts at consolation were, therefore, unfortunately founded when she advised her daughter

not to care about their being so fashionable, because they were all cousins, and must put up with one another. As it was impossible, however, now, to prevent their coming, Lady Middleton resigned herself to the idea of it with all the philosophy of a well-bred woman, contenting herself with merely giving her husband a gentle reprimand on the subject five or six times every day.

The young ladies arrived. Their appearance was by no means ungenteel or unfashionable; their dress was very smart, their manners very civil. They were delighted with the house, and in raptures with the furniture; and they happened to be so doatingly fond of children that Lady Middleton's good opinion was engaged in their favour before they had been an hour at the Park. She declared them to be very agreeable girls indeed, which, for her ladyship, was enthusiastic admiration. Sir John's confidence in his own judgment rose with this animated praise, and he set off directly for the cottage, to tell the Miss Dashwoods of the Miss Steeles' arrival, and to assure them of their being the sweetest girls in the world. From such commendation as this, however, there was not much to be learned. Elinor well knew that the sweetest girls in the world were to be met with in every part of England, under every possible variation of form, face, temper, and understanding. Sir John wanted the whole family to walk to the Park directly, and look at his guests. Benevolent, philanthropic man! It was painful to him even to keep a third cousin to himself.

"Do come now," said he; "pray come—you must come—I declare you shall come. You can't think how you will like them. Lucy is monstrous pretty, and so good-humoured and agreeable! The children

are all hanging about her already, as if she was an old acquaintance. And they both long to see you of all things ; for they have heard at Exeter that you are the most beautiful creatures in the world, and I have told them it is all very true, and a great deal more. You will be delighted with them, I am sure. They have brought the whole coach full of playthings for the children. How can you be so cross as not to come ? Why, they are your cousins, you know, after a fashion. *You* are my cousins, and they are my wife's ; so you must be related."

But Sir John could not prevail ; he could only obtain a promise of their calling at the Park within a day or two, and then left them, in amazement at their indifference, to walk home and boast anew of their attractions to the Miss Steeles, as he had been already boasting of the Miss Steeles to them.

When their promised visit to the Park, and consequent introduction to these young ladies, took place, they found in the appearance of the eldest, who was nearly thirty, with a very plain and not a sensible face, nothing to admire ; but in the other, who was not more than two or three and twenty, they acknowledged considerable beauty. Her features were pretty, and she had a sharp, quick eye, and a smartness of air, which, though it did not give actual elegance or grace, gave distinction to her person. Their manners were particularly civil, and Elinor soon allowed them credit for some kind of sense when she saw with what constant and judicious attentions they were making themselves agreeable to Lady Middleton. With her children they were in continual raptures, extolling their beauty, courting their notice, and humouring all their whims ; and such of their time as could be spared from the

importunate demands which this politeness made on it was spent in admiration of whatever her ladyship was doing, if she happened to be doing anything, or in taking patterns of some elegant new dress, in which her appearance the day before had thrown them into unceasing delight. Fortunately for those who pay their court through such foibles, a fond mother, though in pursuit of praise for her children the most rapacious of human beings, is likewise the most credulous ; her demands are exorbitant, but she will swallow anything ; and the excessive affection and endurance of the Miss Steeles towards her offspring were viewed, therefore, by Lady Middleton without the smallest surprise or distrust. She saw with maternal complacency all the impertinent encroachments and mischievous tricks to which her cousins submitted. She saw their sashes untied, their hair pulled about their ears, their work-bags searched, and their knives and scissors stolen away, and felt no doubt of its being a reciprocal enjoyment. It suggested no other surprise than that Elinor and Marianne should sit so composedly by, without claiming a share in what was passing.

“ John is in such spirits to-day ! ” said she, on his taking Miss Steele’s pocket-handkerchief and throwing it out of window—“ he is full of monkey tricks.”

And soon afterwards, on the second boy’s violently pinching one of the same lady’s fingers, she fondly observed, “ How playful William is ! ”

“ And here is my sweet little Anna-Maria,” she added, tenderly caressing a little girl of three years old, who had not made a noise for the last two minutes ; “ and she is always so gentle and quiet. Never was there such a quiet little thing ! ”

But unfortunately, in bestowing these embraces, a pin in her ladyship's head-dress slightly scratching the child's neck, produced from this pattern of gentleness such violent screams as could hardly be outdone by any creature professedly noisy. The mother's consternation was excessive, but it could not surpass the alarm of the Miss Steeles ; and everything was done by all three, in so critical an emergency which affection could suggest, as likely to assuage the agonies of the little sufferer. She was seated in her mother's lap, covered with kisses, her wound bathed with lavender water by one of the Miss Steeles, who was on her knees to attend her, and her mouth stuffed with sugar-plums by the other. With such a reward for her tears, the child was too wise to cease crying. She still screamed and sobbed lustily, kicked her two brothers for offering to touch her, and all their united soothings were ineffectual, till Lady Middleton luckily remembering that in a scene of similar distress last week some apricot marmalade had been successfully applied for a bruised temple, the same remedy was eagerly proposed for this unfortunate scratch, and a slight intermission of screams in the young lady on hearing it gave them reason to hope that it would not be rejected. She was carried out of the room, therefore, in her mother's arms, in quest of this medicine ; and as the two boys chose to follow, though earnestly entreated by their mother to stay behind, the four young ladies were left in a quietness which the room had not known for many hours.

" Poor little creature ! " said Miss Steele, as soon as they were gone ; " it might have been a very sad accident."

“ Yet I hardly know how,” cried Marianne, “ unless it had been under totally different circumstances. But this is the usual way of heightening alarm, where there is nothing to be alarmed at in reality.”

“ What a sweet woman Lady Middleton is ! ” said Lucy Steele.

Marianne was silent. It was impossible for her to say what she did not feel, however trivial the occasion ; and upon Elinor, therefore, the whole task of telling lies, when politeness required it, always fell. She did her best when thus called on, by speaking of Lady Middleton with more warmth than she felt, though with far less than Miss Lucy.

“ And Sir John, too,” cried the elder sister— “ what a charming man he is ! ”

Here, too, Miss Dashwood’s commendation, being only simple and just, came in without any *éclat*. She merely observed that he was perfectly good-humoured and friendly.

“ And what a charming little family they have ! I never saw such fine children in my life. I declare I quite doat upon them already ; and, indeed, I am always distractedly fond of children.”

“ I should guess so,” said Elinor, with a smile, “ from what I have witnessed this morning.”

“ I have a notion,” said Lucy, “ you think the little Middletons rather too much indulged. Perhaps they may be the outside of enough ; but it is so natural in Lady Middleton, and for my part I love to see children full of life and spirits I cannot bear them if they are tame and quiet.”

“ I confess,” replied Elinor, “ that while I am at Barton Park I never think of tame and quiet children with any abhorrence.”

A short pause succeeded this speech, which was first broken by Miss Steele, who seemed very much disposed for conversation, and who now said, rather abruptly, "And how do you like Devonshire, Miss Dashwood? I suppose you were very sorry to leave Sussex?"

In some surprise at the familiarity of this question, or, at least, of the manner in which it was spoken, Elinor replied that she was.

"Norland is a prodigious beautiful place, is not it?" added Miss Steele.

"We have heard Sir John admire it excessively," said Lucy, who seemed to think some apology necessary for the freedom of her sister.

"I think every one must admire it," replied Elinor, "who ever saw the place; though it is not to be supposed that any one can estimate its beauties as we do."

"And had you a great many smart beaus there? I suppose you have not so many in this part of the world. For my part, I think they are a vast addition always."

"But why should you think," said Lucy, looking ashamed of her sister, "that there are not as many genteel young men in Devonshire as Sussex?"

"Nay, my dear, I'm sure I don't pretend to say that there an't. I'm sure there's a vast many smart beaus in Exeter; but, you know, how could I tell what smart beaus there might be about Norland? And I was only afraid the Miss Dashwoods might find it dull at Barton, if they had not so many as they used to have. But perhaps you young ladies may not care about the beaus, and had as lief be without them as with them. For my part, I think

they are vastly agreeable, provided they dress smart and behave civil. But I can't bear to see them dirty and nasty. Now there's Mr. Rose at Exeter, a prodigious smart young man, quite a beau, clerk to Mr. Simpson, you know; and yet if you do but meet him of a morning, he is not fit to be seen. I suppose your brother was quite a beau, Miss Dashwood, before he married, as he was so rich?"

"Upon my word," replied Elinor, "I cannot tell you, for I do not perfectly comprehend the meaning of the word. But this I can say, that if he ever was a beau before he married, he is one still, for there is not the smallest alteration in him."

"Oh dear! one never thinks of married men's being beaus; they have something else to do."

"Lord! Anne," cried her sister, "you can talk of nothing but beaus; you will make Miss Dashwood believe you think of nothing else." And then, to turn the discourse, she began admiring the house and the furniture.

This specimen of the Miss Steeles was enough. The vulgar freedom and folly of the eldest left her no recommendation; and as Elinor was not blinded by the beauty or the shrewd look of the youngest to her want of real elegance and artlessness, she left the house without any wish of knowing them better.

Not so the Miss Steeles. They came from Exeter well provided with admiration for the use of Sir John Middleton; his family, and all his relations; and no niggardly proportion was now dealt out to his fair cousins, whom they declared to be the most beautiful, elegant, accomplished, and agreeable girls they had ever beheld, and with whom they were particularly anxious to be better acquainted. And to be better acquainted, therefore, Elinor soon found was their

inevitable lot ; for as Sir John was entirely on the side of the Miss Steeles, their party would be too strong for opposition, and that kind of intimacy must be submitted to which consists of sitting an hour or two together in the same room almost every day. Sir John could do no more ; but he did not know that any more was required. To be together was, in his opinion, to be intimate ; and while his continual schemes for their meeting were effectual, he had not a doubt of their being established friends.

To do him justice, he did everything in his power to promote their unreserve, by making the Miss Steeles acquainted with whatever he knew or supposed of his cousins' situations in the most delicate particulars ; and Elinor had not seen them more than twice, before the eldest of them wished her joy on her sister's having been so lucky as to make a conquest of a very smart beau since she came to Barton.

" 'Twill be a fine thing to have her married so young, to be sure," said she ; " and I hear he is quite a beau, and prodigious handsome. And I hope you may have as good luck yourself soon ; but, perhaps, you may have a friend in the corner already."

Elinor could not suppose that Sir John would be more nice in proclaiming his suspicions of her regard for Edward than he had been with respect to Marianne, indeed, it was rather his favourite joke of the two, as being somewhat newer and more conjectural ; and since Edward's visit they had never dined together without his drinking to her best affections with so much significancy and so many nods and winks as to excite general attention. The letter F had been likewise invariably brought forward, and found productive of such countless jokes, that its character

as the wittiest letter in the alphabet had been long established with Elinor.

The Miss Steeles, as she expected, had now all the benefit of these jokes ; and in the eldest of them they raised a curiosity to know the name of the gentleman alluded to, which, though often impertinently expressed, was perfectly of a piece with her general inquisitiveness into the concerns of their family. But Sir John did not sport long with the curiosity which he delighted to raise, for he had at least as much pleasure in telling the name as Miss Steele had in hearing it.

“ His name is Ferrars,” said he, in a very audible whisper ; “ but pray do not tell it, for it’s a great secret.”

“ Ferrars ! ” repeated Miss Steele ; “ Mr. Ferrars is the happy man, is he ?—What ! your sister-in-law’s brother, Miss Dashwood ? A very agreeable young man, to be sure ; I know him very well.”

“ How can you say so, Anne ? ” cried Lucy, who generally made an amendment to all her sister’s assertions. “ Though we have seen him once or twice at my uncle’s, it is rather too much to pretend to know him very well.”

Elinor heard all this with attention and surprise. “ And who was this uncle ? Where did he live ? How came they acquainted ? ” She wished very much to have the subject continued, though she did not choose to join in it herself ; but nothing more of it was said, and for the first time in her life she thought Mrs. Jennings deficient either in curiosity after petty information, or in a disposition to communicate it. The manner in which Miss Steele had spoken of Edward increased her curiosity ; for it struck her as being rather ill-natured, and suggested the suspicion

of that lady's knowing, or fancying herself to know, something to his disadvantage. But her curiosity was unavailing ; for no further notice was taken of Mr. Ferrars's name by Miss Steele when alluded to, or even openly mentioned by Sir John.

Elinor and Lucy

[Elinor Dashwood, who believes that Edward Ferrars is devoted to her, is informed by Lucy Steele that Edward and Lucy have been engaged for four years.]

MARIANNE, who had never much toleration for anything like impertinence, vulgarity, inferiority of parts, or even difference of taste from herself, was at this time particularly ill-disposed, from the state of her spirits, to be pleased with the Miss Steeles, or to encourage their advances ; and to the invariable coldness of her behaviour towards them, which checked every endeavour at intimacy on their side, Elinor principally attributed that preference of herself which soon became evident in the manners of both, but especially of Lucy, who missed no opportunity of engaging her in conversation, or of striving to improve their acquaintance by an easy and frank communication of her sentiments.

Lucy was naturally clever ; her remarks were often just and amusing ; and as a companion for half an hour Elinor frequently found her agreeable ; but her powers had received no aid from education : she was ignorant and illiterate ; and her deficiency of all mental improvement, her want of information in the most common particulars, could not be concealed from Miss Dashwood, in spite of her constant endeavour to appear to advantage. Elinor saw and

pitied her for the neglect of abilities which education might have rendered so respectable ; but she saw, with less tenderness of feeling, the thorough want of delicacy, of rectitude, and integrity of mind, which her attentions, her assiduities, her flatteries at the Park betrayed ; and she could have no lasting satisfaction in the company of a person who joined insincerity with ignorance, whose want of instruction prevented their meeting in conversation on terms of equality, and whose conduct towards others made every show of attention and deference towards herself perfectly valueless.

“ You will think my question an odd one, I dare say,” said Lucy to her one day, as they were walking together from the Park to the cottage ; “ but, pray, are you personally acquainted with your sister-in-law’s mother, Mrs. Ferrars ? ”

Elinor *did* think the question a very odd one, and her countenance expressed it, as she answered that she had never seen Mrs. Ferrars.

“ Indeed ! ” replied Lucy ; “ I wonder at that, for I thought you must have seen her at Norland sometimes. Then, perhaps, you cannot tell me what sort of a woman she is ? ”

“ No,” returned Elinor, cautious of giving her real opinion of Edward’s mother, and not very desirous of satisfying what seemed impertinent curiosity ; “ I know nothing of her.”

“ I am sure you think me very strange, for inquiring about her in such a way,” said Lucy, eyeing Elinor attentively as she spoke ; “ but perhaps there may be reasons—I wish I might venture ; but, however, I hope you will do me the justice of believing that I do not mean to be impertinent.”

Elinor made her a civil reply, and they walked on

for a few minutes in silence. It was broken by Lucy, who renewed the subject again by saying, with some hesitation,—

“ I cannot bear to have you think me impertinently curious. I am sure I would rather do anything in the world than be thought so by a person whose good opinion is so well worth having as yours. And I am sure I should not have the smallest fear of trusting *you*; indeed I should be very glad of your advice how to manage in such an uncomfortable situation as I am; but, however, there is no occasion to trouble *you*. I am sorry you do not happen to know Mrs. Ferrars.”

“ I am sorry I do not,” said Elinor, in great astonishment, “ if it could be of any use to *you* to know my opinion of her. But really I never understood that you were at all connected with that family, and therefore I am a little surprised, I confess, at so serious an inquiry into her character.”

“ I dare say you are, and I am sure I do not at all wonder at it. But if I dared tell you all, you would not be so much surprised. Mrs. Ferrars is certainly nothing to me at present; but the time *may* come—how soon it will come must depend upon herself—when we may be very intimately connected.”

She looked down as she said this, amiably bashful, with only one side glance at her companion to observe its effect on her.

“ Good heavens ! ” cried Elinor, “ what do you mean ? Are you acquainted with Mr. Robert Ferrars ? Can you be ? ” And she did not feel much delighted with the idea of such a sister-in-law.

“ No,” replied Lucy, “ not to Mr. *Robert* Ferrars—I never saw him in my life; but,” fixing her eyes upon Elinor, “ to his elder brother.”

What felt Elinor at that moment ? Astonishment, that would have been as painful as it was strong, had not an immediate disbelief of the assertion attended it. She turned towards Lucy in silent amazement, unable to divine the reason or object of such a declaration ; and though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity, and felt in no danger of an hysterical fit, or a swoon.

“ You may well be surprised,” continued Lucy ; “ for, to be sure, you could have had no idea of it before ; for I dare say he never dropped the smallest hint of it to you or any of your family, because it was always meant to be a great secret, and, I am sure, has been faithfully kept so by me to this hour. Not a soul of all my relations knows of it but Anne, and I never should have mentioned it to you, if I had not felt the greatest dependence in the world upon your secrecy ; and I really thought my behaviour in asking so many questions about Mrs. Ferrars must seem so odd that it ought to be explained. And I do not think Mr. Ferrars can be displeased, when he knows I have trusted you, because I know he has the highest opinion in the world of all your family, and looks upon yourself and the other Miss Dashwoods quite as his own sisters.” She paused.

Elinor for a few moments remained silent. Her astonishment at what she heard was at first too great for words ; but at length, forcing herself to speak, and to speak cautiously, she said, with a calmness of manner which tolerably well concealed her surprise and solicitude—“ May I ask if your engagement is of long standing ? ”

“ We have been engaged these four years.”

“ Four years ! ”

“ Yes.”

Elinor, though greatly shocked, still felt unable to believe it.

"I did not know," said she, "that you were even acquainted till the other day."

"Our acquaintance, however, is of many years' date. He was under my uncle's care, you know, a considerable while."

"Your uncle!"

"Yes; Mr. Pratt. Did you never hear him talk of Mr. Pratt?"

"I think I have," replied Elinor, with an exertion of spirit, which increased with her increase of emotion.

"He was four years with my uncle, who lives at Longstaple, near Plymouth. It was there our acquaintance began, for my sister and me was often staying with my uncle, and it was there our engagement was formed, though not till a year after he had quitted as a pupil; but he was almost always with us afterwards. I was very unwilling to enter into it, as you may imagine, without the knowledge and approbation of his mother; but I was too young, and loved him too well, to be so prudent as I ought to have been. Though you do not know him so well as me, Miss Dashwood, you must have seen enough of him to be sensible he is very capable of making a woman sincerely attached to him."

"Certainly," answered Elinor, without knowing what she said; but after a moment's reflection she added, with revived security of Edward's honour and love, and her companion's falsehood—"Engaged to Mr. Edward Ferrars! I confess myself so totally surprised at what you tell me that really—I beg your pardon, but surely there must be some mistake of person or name. We cannot mean the same Mr. Ferrars."

"We can mean no other," cried Lucy, smiling. "Mr. Edward Ferrars, the eldest son of Mrs. Ferrars of Park Street, and brother of your sister-in-law, Mrs. John Dashwood, is the person I mean. You must allow that *I* am not likely to be deceived as to the name of the man on whom all my happiness depends."

"It is strange," replied Elinor, in a most painful perplexity, "that I should never have heard him even mention your name."

"No ; considering our situation, it was not strange. Our first care has been to keep the matter secret. You knew nothing of me, or my family, and, therefore, there could be no occasion for ever mentioning my name to you ; and as he was always particularly afraid of his sister's suspecting anything, *that* was reason enough for his not mentioning it."

She was silent. Elinor's security sank, but her self-command did not sink with it.

"Four years you have been engaged," said she, with a firm voice.

"Yes ; and Heaven knows how much longer we may have to wait. Poor Edward ! it puts him quite out of heart." Then taking a small miniature from her pocket, she added, "To prevent the possibility of mistake, be so good as to look at this face. It does not do him justice, to be sure, but yet I think you cannot be deceived as to the person it was drew for. I have had it above these three years."

She put it into her hands as she spoke ; and when Elinor saw the painting, whatever other doubts her fear of a too hasty decision, or her wish of detecting falsehood, might suffer to linger in her mind, she could have none of its being Edward's face. She returned it almost instantly, acknowledging the likeness.

"I have never been able," continued Lucy, "to

give him my picture in return, which I am very much vexed at, for he has been always so anxious to get it. But I am determined to sit for it the very first opportunity."

"You are quite in the right," replied Elinor calmly. They then proceeded a few paces in silence. Lucy spoke first.

"I am sure," said she, "I have no doubt in the world of your faithfully keeping this secret, because you must know of what importance it is to us not to have it reach his mother; for she would never approve of it, I dare say. I shall have no fortune, and I fancy she is an exceeding proud woman."

"I certainly did not seek your confidence," said Elinor; "but you do me no more than justice in imagining that I may be depended on. Your secret is safe with me; but pardon me if I express some surprise at so unnecessary a communication. You must at least have felt that my being acquainted with it could not add to its safety."

As she said this she looked earnestly at Lucy, hoping to discover something in her countenance—perhaps the falsehood of the greatest part of what she had been saying; but Lucy's countenance suffered no change.

"I was afraid you would think I was taking a great liberty with you," said she, "in telling you all this. I have not known you long, to be sure, personally at least, but I have known you and all your family by description a great while; and as soon as I saw you, I felt almost as if you was an old acquaintance. Besides, in the present case, I really thought some explanation was due to you, after my making such particular inquiries about Edward's mother; and I am so unfortunate that I have not a creature whose

advice I can ask. Anne is the only person that knows of it, and she has no judgment at all ; indeed, she does me a great deal more harm than good, for I am in constant fear of her betraying me. She does not know how to hold her tongue, as you must perceive ; and I am sure I was in the greatest fright in the world t'other day, when Edward's name was mentioned by Sir John, lest she should out with it all. You can't think how much I go through in my mind from it altogether. I only wonder that I am alive, after what I have suffered for Edward's sake these last four years. Everything in such suspense and uncertainty, and seeing him so seldom ! We can hardly meet above twice a year. I am sure I wonder my heart is not quite broke."

Here she took out her handkerchief ; but Elinor did not feel very compassionate.

" Sometimes," continued Lucy, after wiping her eyes, " I think whether it would not be better for us both to break off the matter entirely." As she said this she looked directly at her companion. " But then, at other times, I have not resolution enough for it. I cannot bear the thoughts of making him so miserable, as I know the very mention of such a thing would do. And on my own account too—so dear as he is to me—I don't think I could be equal to it. What would you advise me to do in such a case, Miss Dashwood ? What would you do yourself ? "

" Pardon me," replied Elinor, startled by the question " but I can give you no advice under such circumstances. Your own judgment must direct you."

" To be sure," continued Lucy, after a few minutes' silence on both sides, " his mother must provide for him some time or other ; but poor Edward is so cast down about it ! Did not you think him dreadful

low-spirited when he was at Barton? He was so miserable when he left us at Longstaple, to go to you, that I was afraid you would think him quite ill."

"Did he come from your uncle's then, when he visited us?"

"Oh yes; he had been staying a fortnight with us. Did you think he came directly from town?"

"No," replied Elinor, most feelingly sensible of every fresh circumstance in favour of Lucy's veracity; "I remember he told us that he had been staying a fortnight with some friends near Plymouth." She remembered, too, her own surprise at the time, at his mentioning nothing further of those friends, at his total silence with respect even to their names.

"Did not you think him sadly out of spirits?" repeated Lucy.

"We did, indeed, particularly so when he first arrived."

"I begged him to exert himself, for fear you should suspect what was the matter; but it made him so melancholy, not being able to stay more than a fortnight with us, and seeing me so much affected. Poor fellow! I am afraid it is just the same with him now, for he writes in wretched spirits. I heard from him just before I left Exeter," taking a letter from her pocket, and carelessly showing the direction to Elinor. "You know his hand, I dare say—a charming one it is; but that is not written so well as usual. He was tired, I dare say, for he had just filled the sheet to me as full as possible."

Elinor saw that it *was* his hand, and she could doubt no longer. The picture, she had allowed herself to believe, might have been accidentally obtained—it might not have been Edward's gift; but a correspondence between them by letter could sub-

sist only under a positive engagement—could be authorised by nothing else. For a few moments she was almost overcome—her heart sank within her, and she could hardly stand; but exertion was indispensably necessary; and she struggled so resolutely against the oppression of her feelings that her success was speedy, and for the time complete.

“Writing to each other,” said Lucy, returning the letter into her pocket, “is the only comfort we have in such long separations. Yes, *I* have one other comfort in his picture; but poor Edward has not even *that*. If he had but my picture, he says he should be easy. I gave him a lock of my hair set in a ring when he was at Longstaple last, and that was some comfort to him, he said, but not equal to a picture. Perhaps you might notice the ring when you saw him?”

“I did,” said Elinor, with a composure of voice under which was concealed an emotion and distress beyond anything she had ever felt before. She was mortified, shocked, confounded.

Fortunately for her, they had now reached the cottage, and the conversation could be continued no further. After sitting with them a few minutes, the Miss Steeles returned to the Park, and Elinor was then at liberty to think and be wretched.

Willoughby's Infidelity

[*Marianne is jilted by Willoughby, who marries a wealthy girl in order to free himself from financial embarrassment.*]

Mrs. Jennings came immediately to their room on her return, and without waiting to have her request of admittance answered, opened the door and walked in with a look of real concern.

"How do you do, my dear?" said she, in a voice of great compassion to Marianne, who turned away her face without attempting to answer.—"How is she, Miss Dashwood? Poor thing! she looks very bad. No wonder. Ay, it is but too true. He is to be married very soon—a good-for-nothing fellow! I have no patience with him. Mrs. Taylor told me of it half an hour ago, and she was told it by a particular friend of Miss Grey herself, else I am sure I should not have believed it; and I was almost ready to sink as it was. Well, said I, all I can say is, that if it is true, he has used a young lady of my acquaintance abominably ill, and I wish with all my soul his wife may plague his heart out. And so I shall always say, my dear, you may depend on it. I have no notion of men's going on in this way; and if ever I meet him again, I will give him such a dressing as he has not had this many a day.—But there is one comfort, my dear Miss Marianne—he is not the only young man in the world worth having; and with your pretty face you will never want admirers.—Well, poor thing! I won't disturb her any longer, for she had better have her cry out at once and have done with it. The Parrys and Sandersons, luckily, are coming to-night, you know, and that will amuse her."

She then went away, walking on tiptoe out of the room, as if she supposed her young friend's affliction could be increased by noise.

Marianne, to the surprise of her sister, determined on dining with them. Elinor even advised her against it. But "no, she would go down; she could bear it very well, and the bustle about her would be less." Elinor, pleased to have her governed for a moment by such a motive, though believing it hardly possible that she could sit out the dinner, said no more; and adjusting her dress for her as well as she could, while Marianne still remained on the bed, was ready to assist her into the dining-room as soon as they were summoned to it.

When there, though looking most wretchedly, she ate more and was calmer than her sister had expected. Had she tried to speak, or had she been conscious of half Mrs. Jennings's well-meant but ill-judged attentions to her, this calmness could not have been maintained; but not a syllable escaped her lips, and the abstraction of her thoughts preserved her in ignorance of everything that was passing before her.

Elinor, who did justice to Mrs. Jennings's kindness, though its effusions were often distressing, and sometimes almost ridiculous, made her those acknowledgments, and returned her those civilities, which her sister could not make or return for herself. Their good friend saw that Marianne was unhappy, and felt that everything was due to her which might make her at all less so. She treated her, therefore, with all the indulgent fondness of a parent towards a favourite child on the last day of its holidays. Marianne was to have the best place by the fire, was to be tempted to eat by every delicacy in the house, and to be amused by the relation of all the news of the day.

Had not Elinor, in the sad countenance of her sister, seen a check to all mirth, she could have been entertained by Mrs. Jennings's endeavours to cure a disappointment in love by a variety of sweetmeats and olives and a good fire. As soon, however, as the consciousness of all this was forced by continual repetition on Marianne, she could stay no longer. With a hasty exclamation of misery, and a sign to her sister not to follow her, she directly got up and hurried out of the room.

"Poor soul!" cried Mrs. Jennings, as soon as she was gone, "how it grieves me to see her! And I declare if she is not gone away without finishing her wine! And the dried cherries too! Lord! nothing seems to do her any good. I am sure if I knew of anything she would like, I would send all over the town for it. Well, it is the oddest thing to me that a man should use such a pretty girl so ill! But when there is plenty of money on one side, and next to none on the other, Lord bless you, they care no more about such things!"

"The lady, then—Miss Grey I think you called her—is very rich?"

"Fifty thousand pounds, my dear. Did you ever see her?—a smart, stylish girl, they say, but not handsome. I remember her aunt very well, Biddy Henshawe; she married a very wealthy man. But the family are all rich together. Fifty thousand pounds! and by all accounts it won't come before it's wanted, for they say he is all to pieces. No wonder, dashing about with his curricule and hunters! Well, it don't signify talking; but when a young man, be he who he will, comes and makes love to a pretty girl, and promises marriage, he has no business to fly off from his word, only because he grows poor and

a richer girl is ready to have him. Why don't he, in such a case, sell his horses, let his house, turn off his servants, and make a thorough reform at once? I warrant you Miss Marianne would have been ready to wait till matters came round. But that won't do nowadays; nothing in the way of pleasure can ever be given up by the young men of this age."

"Do you know what kind of a girl Miss Grey is? Is she said to be amiable?"

"I never heard any harm of her; indeed, I hardly ever heard her mentioned, except that Mrs. Taylor did say this morning that one day Miss Walker hinted to her that she believed Mr. and Mrs. Ellison would not be sorry to have Miss Grey married, for she and Mrs. Ellison could never agree."

"And who are the Ellisons?"

"Her guardians, my dear. But now she is of age, and may choose for herself; and a pretty choice she has made!—What now?" after pausing a moment; "your poor sister is gone to her own room, I suppose, to moan by herself. Is there nothing one can get to comfort her? Poor dear, it seems quite cruel to let her be alone. Well, by-and-by we shall have a few friends, and that will amuse her a little. What shall we play at? She hates whist, I know; but is there no round game she cares for?"

"Dear ma'am, this kindness is quite unnecessary. Marianne, I daresay, will not leave her room again this evening. I shall persuade her, if I can, to go early to bed, for I am sure she wants rest."

"Ay, I believe that will be best for her. Let her name her own supper, and go to bed. Lord! no wonder she has been looking so bad and so cast down this last week or two; for this matter, I suppose, has been hanging over her head as long as that.

And so the letter that came to-day finished it! Poor soul! I am sure if I had had a notion of it, I would not have joked her about it for all my money. But then, you know, how should I guess such a thing? I made sure of its being nothing but a common love letter, and you know young people like to be laughed at about them. Lord! how concerned Sir John and my daughters will be when they hear it! If I had had my senses about me, I might have called in Conduit Street in my way home and told them of it. But I shall see them to-morrow."

"It would be unnecessary, I am sure, for you to caution Mrs. Palmer and Sir John against ever naming Mr. Willoughby, or making the slightest allusion to what has passed, before my sister. Their own good-nature must point out to them the real cruelty of appearing to know anything about it when she is present; and the less that may ever be said to myself on the subject, the more my feelings will be spared, as you, my dear madam, will easily believe."

"O Lord! yes, that I do indeed. It must be terrible for you to hear it talked of; and as for your sister, I am sure I would not mention a word about it to her for the world. You saw I did not all dinner-time. No more would Sir John nor my daughters, for they are all very thoughtful and considerate—especially if I give them a hint, as I certainly will. For my part, I think the less that is said about such things the better, the sooner 'tis blown over and forgot. And what good does talking ever do, you know?"

"In this affair it can only do harm—more so, perhaps, than in many cases of a similar kind; for it has been attended by circumstances which, for the sake of every one concerned in it, make it unfit

to become the public conversation. I must do *this* justice to Mr. Willoughby—he has broken no positive engagement with my sister.”

“Law, my dear! don’t pretend to defend him. No positive engagement, indeed! after taking her all over Allenham House, and fixing on the very rooms they were to live in hereafter!”

Elinor, for her sister’s sake, could not press the subject further; and she hoped it was not required of her for Willoughby’s sake, since, though Marianne might lose much, he could gain very little by the enforcement of the real truth. After a short silence on both sides, Mrs. Jennings, with all her natural hilarity, burst forth again.

“Well, my dear, ’tis a true saying about an ill wind, for it will be all the better for Colonel Brandon. He will have her at last; ay, that he will. Mind me, now, if they an’t married by midsummer. Lord! how he’ll chuckle over this news! I hope he will come to-night. It will be all to one a better match for your sister. Two thousand a year without debt or drawback—except the little love-child, indeed; ay, I had forgot her. But she may be prenticed out at small cost, and then what does it signify? Delaford is a nice place, I can tell you; exactly what I call a nice old-fashioned place, full of comforts and conveniences; quite shut in with great garden walls that are covered with the best fruit-trees in the country; and such a mulberry-tree in one corner! Lord! how Charlotte and I did stuff the only time we were there! Then there is a dovecote, some delightful stewponds, and a very pretty canal, and everything, in short, that one could wish for; and, moreover, it is close to the church, and only a quarter of a mile from the turnpike-road. So ’tis never dull;

for if you only go and sit up in an old yew arbour behind the house, you may see all the carriages that pass along. Oh, 'tis a nice place! A butcher hard by in the village, and the parsonage house within a stone's throw. To my fancy a thousand times prettier than Barton Park, where they are forced to send three miles for their meat, and have not a neighbour nearer than your mother. Well, I shall spirit up the colonel as soon as I can. One shoulder of mutton, you know, drives another down. If we *can* but put Willoughby out of her head!"

"Aye, if we can but do *that*, ma'am," said Elinor, "we shall do very well with or without Colonel Brandon." And then rising, she went away to join Marianne, whom she found, as she expected, in her own room, leaning in silent misery over the small remains of a fire, which till Elinor's entrance had been her only light.

"You had better leave me," was all the notice that her sister received from her.

"I will leave you," said Elinor, "if you will go to bed." But this, from the momentary perverseness of impatient suffering, she at first refused to do. Her sister's earnest though gentle persuasion, however, soon softened her to compliance; and Elinor saw her lay her aching head on the pillow, and saw her, as she hoped, in a way to get some quiet rest before she left her.

In the drawing-room, whither she then repaired, she was soon joined by Mrs. Jennings, with a wine-glass full of something in her hand.

"My dear," said she, entering, "I have just recollected that I have some of the finest old Constantia wine in the house that ever was tasted, so I have brought a glass of it for your sister. My poor hus-

band ! how fond he was of it ! Whenever he had a touch of his old colicky gout, he said it did him more good than anything else in the world. Do take it to your sister."

"Dear ma'am," replied Elinor, smiling at the difference of the complaints for which it was recommended, "how good you are ! But I have just left Marianne in bed, and, I hope, almost asleep ; and as I think nothing will be of so much service to her as rest, if you will give me leave I will drink the wine myself."

Mrs. Jennings, though regretting that she had not been five minutes earlier, was satisfied with the compromise ; and Elinor, as she swallowed the chief of it, reflected that, though its good effects on a colicky gout were at present of little importance to her, its healing powers on a disappointed heart might be as reasonably tried on herself as on her sister.

Colonel Brandon came in while the party were at tea, and by his manner of looking round the room for Marianne, Elinor immediately fancied that he neither expected nor wished to see her there, and, in short, that he was already aware of what occasioned her absence. Mrs. Jennings was not struck by the same thought ; for soon after his entrance she walked across the room to the tea-table where Elinor presided, and whispered, "The colonel looks as grave as ever, you see : he knows nothing of it ; do tell him, my dear."

He shortly afterwards drew a chair close to hers, and with a look which perfectly assured her of his good information, inquired after her sister.

"Marianne is not well" said she. "She has been indisposed all day, and we have persuaded her to go to bed."

“ Perhaps, then,” he hesitatingly replied, “ what I heard this morning may be—there may be more truth in it than I could believe possible at first.”

“ What did you hear ? ”

“ That a gentleman, whom I had reason to think—in short, that a man whom I *knew* to be engaged—but how shall I tell you ? If you know it already, as surely you must, I may be spared.”

“ You mean,” answered Elinor, with forced calmness, “ Mr. Willoughby’s marriage with Miss Grey. Yes, we *do* know it all. This seems to have been a day of general elucidation, for this very morning first unfolded it to us. Mr. Willoughby is unfathomable ! Where did you hear it ? ”

“ In a stationer’s shop in Pall Mall, where I had business. Two ladies were waiting for their carriage, and one of them was giving the other an account of the intended match, in a voice so little attempting concealment that it was impossible for me not to hear all. The name of Willoughby, John Willoughby, frequently repeated, first caught my attention ; and what followed was a positive assertion that everything was now finally settled respecting his marriage with Miss Grey : it was no longer to be a secret ; it would take place even within a few weeks,—with many particulars of preparations and other matters. One thing especially I remember, because it served to identify the man still more. As soon as the ceremony was over, they were to go to Combe Magna, his seat in Somersetshire. My astonishment !—but it would be impossible to describe what I felt. The communicative lady, I learned on inquiry—for I stayed in the shop till they were gone—was a Mrs. Ellison, and that, as I have been since informed, is the name of Miss Grey’s guardian.’

“ It is. But have you likewise heard that Miss Grey has fifty thousand pounds ? In that, if in anything, we may find an explanation.”

“ It may be so. But Willoughby is capable—at least I think——” He stopped a moment, then added, in a voice which seemed to distrust itself, “ And your sister—how did she——”

“ Her sufferings have been very severe ; I have only to hope that they may be proportionately short. It has been—it is—a most cruel affliction. Till yesterday, I believe, she never doubted his regard ; and even now perhaps—but *I* am almost convinced that he never was really attached to her. He has been very deceitful ! and in some points there seems a hardness of heart about him.”

“ Ah ! ” said Colonel Brandon, “ there is, indeed ! But your sister does not—I think you said so—she does not consider it quite as you do ? ”

“ You know her disposition, and may believe how eagerly she would still justify him if she could.”

He made no answer ; and soon afterwards, by the removal of the tea-things and the arrangement of the card-parties, the subject was necessarily dropped. Mrs. Jennings, who had watched them with pleasure while they were talking, and who expected to see the effect of Miss Dashwoods’ communication in such an instantaneous gaiety on Colonel Brandon’s side as might have become a man in the bloom of youth, of hope, and happiness, saw him, with amazement, remain the whole evening more serious and thoughtful than usual.

The Steeles visit Mrs. Jennings and Elinor

The Willoughbys left town as soon as they were married ; and Elinor now hoped, as there could be no danger of her seeing either of them, to prevail on her sister, who had never yet left the house since the blow first fell, to go out again, by degrees, as she had done before.

About this time the two Miss Steeles, lately arrived at their cousin's house in Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn, presented themselves again before their more grand relations in Conduit and Berkeley Street, and were welcomed by them all with great cordiality.

Elinor only was sorry to see them. Their presence always gave her pain, and she hardly knew how to make a very gracious return to the overpowering delight of Lucy in finding her *still* in town.

"I should have been quite disappointed if I had not found you here *still*," said she repeatedly, with a strong emphasis on the word. "But I always thought I *should*. I was almost sure you would not leave London yet awhile, though you *told* me, you know, at Barton, that you should not stay above a *month*. But I thought at the time that you would most likely change your mind when it came to the point. It would have been such a great pity to have went away before your brother and sister came. And now, to be sure, you will be in no *hurry* to be gone. I am amazingly glad you did not keep to *your word*."

Elinor perfectly understood her, and was forced to use all her self-command to make it appear that she did *not*.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Jennings, "and how did you travel?"

“Not in the stage, I assure you,” replied Miss Steele, with quick exultation; “we came post all the way, and had a very smart beau to attend us. Dr. Davies was coming to town, and so we thought we’d join him in a post-chaise; and he behaved very genteelly, and paid ten or twelve shillings more than we did.”

“Oh, oh!” cried Mrs. Jennings; “very pretty, indeed! And the doctor is a single man, I warrant you.”

“There now,” said Miss Steele, affectedly simpering, “everybody laughs at me so about the doctor, and I cannot think why. My cousins say they are sure I have made a conquest; but, for my part, I declare I never think about him from one hour’s end to another. ‘Lord! here comes your beau, Nancy’ my cousin said t’other day, when she saw him crossing the street to the house. ‘My beau, indeed!’ said I; ‘I cannot think who you mean. The doctor is no beau of mine.’”

“Ay, ay, that is very pretty talking; but it won’t do—the doctor is the man, I see.”

“No, indeed!” replied her cousin, with affected earnestness, “and I beg you will contradict it if you ever hear it talked of.”

Mrs. Jennings directly gave her the gratifying assurance that she certainly would not, and Miss Steele was made completely happy.

“I suppose you will go and stay with your brother and sister, Miss Dashwood, when they come to town,” said Lucy, returning, after a cessation of hostile hints, to the charge.

“No, I do not think we shall.”

“Oh yes, I dare say you will.”

Elinor would not humour her by further opposition.

“What a charming thing it is that Mrs. Dashwood can spare you both for so long a time together!”

“Long a time, indeed!” interposed Mrs. Jennings. “Why, their visit is but just begun!”

Lucy was silenced.

“I am sorry we cannot see your sister, Miss Dashwood,” said Miss Steele. “I am sorry she is not well;” for Marianne had left the room on their arrival.

“You are very good. My sister will be equally sorry to miss the pleasure of seeing you; but she has been very much plagued lately with nervous headaches, which make her unfit for company or conversation.”

“Oh dear, that is a great pity! But such old friends as Lucy and me!—I think she might see *us*; and I am sure we would not speak a word.”

Elinor, with great civility, declined the proposal. Her sister was, perhaps, laid down upon the bed, or in her dressing-gown, and therefore not able to come to them.

“Oh, if that’s all,” cried Miss Steele, “we can just as well go and see *her*.”

Elinor began to find this impertinence too much for her temper; but she was saved the trouble of checking it by Lucy’s sharp reprimand, which now, as on many occasions, though it did not give much sweetness to the manners of one sister, was of advantage in governing those of the other.

Discontent and Jealousy

Within a few days after this meeting, the newspapers announced to the world that the lady of Thomas Palmer, Esq., was safely delivered of a son and heir; a very interesting and satisfactory paragraph, at least to all those intimate connections who knew it before.

This event, highly important to Mrs. Jennings's happiness, produced a temporary alteration in the disposal of her time, and influenced in a like degree the engagements of her young friends: for as she wished to be as much as possible with Charlotte, she went thither every morning as soon as she was dressed, and did not return till late in the evening; and the Miss Dashwoods, at the particular request of the Middletons, spent the whole of every day in Conduit Street. For their own comfort, they would much rather have remained, at least all the morning, in Mrs. Jennings's house; but it was not a thing to be urged against the wishes of everybody. Their hours were therefore made over to Lady Middleton and the two Miss Steeles, by whom their company was, in fact, as little valued as it was professedly sought.

They had too much sense to be desirable companions to the former; and by the latter they were considered with a jealous eye, as intruding on *their* ground, and sharing the kindness which they wanted to monopolize. Though nothing could be more polite than Lady Middleton's behaviour to Elinor and Marianne, she did not really like them at all. Because they neither flattered herself nor her children, she could not believe them good-natured; and

because they were fond of reading, she fancied them satirical, perhaps without exactly knowing what it was to be satirical, but *that* did not signify. It was censure in common use, and easily given.

Their presence was a restraint both on her and on Lucy. It checked the idleness of one and the business of the other. Lady Middleton was ashamed of doing nothing before them, and the flattery which Lucy was proud to think of and administer at other times she feared they would despise her for offering. Miss Steele was the least discomposed of the three by their presence, and it was in their power to reconcile her to it entirely. Would either of them only have given her a full and minute account of the whole affair between Marianne and Mr. Willoughby, she would have thought herself amply rewarded for the sacrifice of the best place by the fire after dinner, which their arrival occasioned. But this conciliation was not granted; for though she often threw out expressions of pity for her sister to Elinor, and more than once dropped a reflection on the inconstancy of beaux before Marianne, no effect was produced, but a look of indifference from the former, or of disgust in the latter. An effort even yet lighter might have made her their friend—would they only have laughed at her about the doctor! But so little were they, any more than the others, inclined to oblige her, that if Sir John dined from home she might spend a whole day without hearing any other raillery on the subject than what she was kind enough to bestow on herself.

All these jealousies and discontents, however, were so totally unsuspected by Mrs. Jennings, that she thought it a delightful thing for the girls to be together, and generally congratulated her young friends

every night on having escaped the company of a stupid old woman so long. She joined them sometimes at Sir John's, and sometimes at her own house ; but wherever it was, she always came in excellent spirits, full of delight and importance, attributing Charlotte's well-doing to her own care, and ready to give so exact, so minute a detail of her situation, as only Miss Steele had curiosity enough to desire. One thing *did* disturb her, and of that she made her daily complaint. Mr. Palmer maintained the common but unfatherly opinion among his sex, of all infants being alike ; and though she could plainly perceive, at different times, the most striking resemblance between this baby and every one of his relations on both sides, there was no convincing his father of it, no persuading him to believe that it was not exactly like every other baby of the same age ; nor could he even be brought to acknowledge the simple proposition of its being the finest child in the world.

I come now to the relation of a misfortune which about this time befell Mrs. John Dashwood. It so happened that while her two sisters, with Mrs. Jennings, were first calling on her in Harley Street, another of her acquaintance had dropped in—a circumstance in itself not apparently likely to produce evil to her. But while the imaginations of other people will carry them away to form wrong judgments of our conduct, and to decide on it by slight appearances, one's happiness must in some measure be always at the mercy of chance. In the present instance, this last-arrived lady allowed her fancy so far to outrun truth and probability, that on merely hearing the name of the Miss Dashwoods, and understanding them to be Mr. Dashwood's sisters, she immediately concluded them to be staying

in Harley Street ; and this misconstruction produced, within a day or two afterwards, cards of invitation for them, as well as for their brother and sister, to a small musical party at her house ; the consequence of which was that Mrs. John Dashwood was obliged to submit not only to the exceedingly great inconvenience of sending her carriage for the Miss Dashwoods, but, what was still worse, must be subject to all the unpleasantness of appearing to treat them with attention ; and who could tell that they might not expect to go out with her a second time ? The power of disappointing them, it was true, must always be hers. But that was not enough ; for when people are determined on a mode of conduct which they know to be wrong, they feel injured by the expectation of anything better from them.

Marianne had now been brought, by degrees, so much into the habit of going out every day, that it was become a matter of indifference to her whether she went or not ; and she prepared quietly and mechanically for every evening's engagement, though without expecting the smallest amusement from any, and very often without knowing, till the last moment, where it was to take her.

To her dress and appearance she was grown so perfectly indifferent as not to bestow half the consideration on it, during the whole of her toilet, which it received from Miss Steele in the first five minutes of their being together, when it was finished. Nothing escaped *her* minute observation and general curiosity ; she saw everything, and asked everything ; was never easy till she knew the price of every part of Marianne's dress ; could have guessed the number of her gowns altogether with better judgment than Marianne herself ; and was not without hopes of

finding out, before they parted, how much her washing cost per week, and how much she had every year to spend upon herself. The impertinence of these kind of scrutinies, moreover, was generally concluded with a compliment, which, though meant as its *douceur*, was considered by Marianne as the greatest impertinence of all ; for after undergoing an examination into the value and make of her gown, the colour of her shoes, and the arrangement of her hair, she was almost sure of being told that upon " her word she looked vastly smart, and she dared to say would make a great many conquests."

With such encouragement as this was she dismissed, on the present occasion, to her brother's carriage, which they were ready to enter five minutes after it stopped at the door—a punctuality not very agreeable to their sister-in-law, who had preceded them to the house of her acquaintance, and was there hoping for some delay on their part that might inconvenience either herself or her coachman.

The events of the evening were not very remarkable. The party, like other musical parties, comprehended a great many people who had real taste for the performance, and a great many more who had none at all ; and the performers themselves were, as usual, in their own estimation, and that of their immediate friends, the first private performers in England.

As Elinor was neither musical nor affecting to be so, she made no scruple of turning away her eyes from the grand pianoforte whenever it suited her, and, unrestrained even by the presence of a harp and a violoncello, would fix them at pleasure on any other object in the room. In one of these excursive glances she perceived, among a group of young men, the very he who had given them a lecture on toothpick-cases

at Gray's. She perceived him soon afterwards looking at herself, and speaking familiarly to her brother ; and had just determined to find out his name from the latter, when they both came towards her, and Mr. Dashwood introduced him to her as Mr. Robert Ferrars.

He addressed her with easy civility, and twisted his head into a bow, which assured her, as plainly as words could have done, that he was exactly the coxcomb she had heard him described to be by Lucy. Happy had it been for her if her regard for Edward had depended less on his own merit than on the merit of his nearest relations ! for then his brother's bow must have given the finishing stroke to what the ill-humour of his mother and sister would have begun. But while she wondered at the difference of the two young men, she did not find that the emptiness and conceit of the one put her at all out of charity with the modesty and worth of the other. Why they *were* different Robert explained to her himself in the course of a quarter of an hour's conversation ; for talking of his brother, and lamenting the extreme *gaucherie* which he really believed kept him from mixing in proper society, he candidly and generously attributed it much less to any natural deficiency than to the misfortune of a private education ; while he himself, though probably without any particular, any material superiority by nature, merely from the advantage of a public school, was as well fitted to mix in the world as any other man.

“ Upon my soul,” he added, “ I believe it is nothing more ; and so I often tell my mother when she is grieving about it. ‘ My dear madam,’ I always say to her, ‘ you must make yourself easy. The evil is now irremediable, and it has been entirely your own

doing. Why would you be persuaded by my uncle, Sir Robert, against your own judgment, to place Edward under private tuition, at the most critical time of his life? If you had only sent him to Westminster, as well as myself, instead of sending him to Mr. Pratt's, all this would have been prevented.' This is the way in which I always consider the matter, and my mother is perfectly convinced of her error."

Elinor would not oppose his opinion, because, whatever might be her general estimation of the advantage of a public school, she could not think of Edward's abode in Mr. Pratt's family with any satisfaction.

"You reside in Devonshire, I think," was his next observation, "in a cottage near Dawlish."

Elinor set him right as to its situation, and it seemed rather surprising to him that anybody could live in Devonshire without living near Dawlish. He bestowed his hearty approbation, however, on their species of house.

"For my own part," said he, "I am excessively fond of a cottage; there is always so much comfort, so much elegance about them. And I protest, if I had any money to spare, I should buy a little land and build one myself, within a short distance of London, where I might drive myself down at any time, and collect a few friends about me, and be happy. I advise everybody who is going to build, to build a cottage. My friend Lord Courtland came to me the other day on purpose to ask my advice, and laid before me three different plans of Bonomi's. I was to decide on the best of them. 'My dear Courtland,' said I, immediately throwing them all into the fire, 'do not adopt either of them, but by all

means build a cottage.' And that, I fancy, will be the end of it.

"Some people imagine that there can be no accommodations, no space, in a cottage ; but this is all a mistake. I was last month at my friend Elliott's, near Dartford. Lady Elliott wished to give a dance. 'But how can it be done?' said she. 'My dear Ferrars, do tell me how it is to be managed. There is not a room in this cottage that will hold ten couple ; and where can the supper be?' I immediately saw that there could be no difficulty in it, so I said, 'My dear Lady Elliott, do not be uneasy. The dining-parlour will admit eighteen couple with ease ; card-tables may be placed in the drawing-room ; the library may be open for tea and other refreshments ; and let the supper be set out in the saloon.' Lady Elliott was delighted with the thought. We measured the dining-room, and found it would hold exactly eighteen couple ; and the affair was arranged precisely after my plan. So that, in fact, you see, if people do but know how to set about it, every comfort may be as well enjoyed in a cottage as in the most spacious dwelling."

Elinor agreed to it all, for she did not think he deserved the compliment of rational opposition.

As John Dashwood had no more pleasure in music than his eldest sister, his mind was equally at liberty to fix on anything else ; and a thought struck him during the evening which he communicated to his wife, for her approbation, when they got home. The consideration of Mrs. Dennison's mistake, in supposing his sisters their guests, had suggested the propriety of their being really invited to become such while Mrs. Jennings's engagements kept her from home. The expense would be nothing, the inconvenience

not more ; and it was altogether an attention which the delicacy of his conscience pointed out to be requisite to its complete enfranchisement from his promise to his father. Fanny was startled at the proposal.

“ I do not see how it can be done,” said she, “ without affronting Lady Middleton, for they spend every day with her ; otherwise I should be exceedingly glad to do it. You know I am always ready to pay them any attention in my power, as my taking them out this evening shows. But they are Lady Middleton’s visitors ; how can I ask them away from her ? ”

Her husband, but with great humility, did not see the force of her objection. “ They had already spent a week in this manner in Conduit Street, and Lady Middleton could not be displeased at their giving the same number of days to such near relations.”

Fanny paused a moment, and then, with fresh vigour, said,—

“ My love, I would ask them with all my heart, if it was in my power ; but I had just settled within myself to ask the Miss Steeles to spend a few days with us. They are very well-behaved, good kind of girls ; and I think the attention is due to them, as their uncle did so very well by Edward. We can ask your sisters some other year, you know ; but the Miss Steeles may not be in town any more. I am sure you will like them—indeed you *do* like them, you know, very much already ; and so does my mother ; and they are such favourites with Harry ! ”

Mr. Dashwood was convinced. He saw the necessity of inviting the Miss Steeles immediately, and his conscience was pacified by the resolution of inviting his sisters another year ; at the same time, however, slyly suspecting that another year would

make the invitation needless, by bringing Elinor to town as Colonel Brandon's wife, and Marianne as *their* visitor.

Fanny, rejoicing in her escape, and proud of the ready wit that had procured it, wrote the next morning to Lucy, to request her company and her sister's, for some days, in Harley Street, as soon as Lady Middleton could spare them. This was enough to make Lucy really and reasonably happy. Mrs. Dashwood seemed actually working for her herself—cherishing all her hopes, and promoting all her views! Such an opportunity of being with Edward and his family was, above all things, the most material to her interest, and such an invitation the most gratifying to her feelings! It was an advantage that could not be too gratefully acknowledged, nor too speedily made use of; and the visit to Lady Middleton, which had not before had any precise limits, was instantly discovered to have been always meant to end in two days' time.

When the note was shown to Elinor, as it was within ten minutes after its arrival, it gave her, for the first time, some share in the expectations of Lucy; for such a mark of uncommon kindness, vouchsafed on so short an acquaintance, seemed to declare that the good will towards her arose from something more than merely malice against herself, and might be brought, by time and address, to do everything that Lucy wished. Her flattery had already subdued the pride of Lady Middleton, and made an entry into the close heart of Mrs. John Dashwood; and these were effects that laid open the probability of greater.

The Miss Steeles removed to Harley Street, and all that reached Elinor of their influence there strengthened her expectation of the event. Sir John, who

called on them more than once, brought home such accounts of the favour they were in as must be universally striking. Mrs. Dashwood had never been so much pleased with any young women in her life as she was with them ; had given each of them a needlebook made by some emigrant ; called Lucy by her Christian name ; and did not know whether she should ever be able to part with them.

Miss Steele's Garrulity

Nothing new was heard by them for a day or two afterwards of affairs in Harley Street or Bartlett's Buildings. But though so much of the matter was known to them already that Mrs. Jennings might have had enough to do in spreading that knowledge further without seeking after more, she had resolved from the first to pay a visit of comfort and inquiry to her cousins as soon as she could, and nothing but the hindrance of more visitors than usual had prevented her going to them within that time.

The third day succeeding their knowledge of the particulars was so fine, so beautiful a Sunday, as to draw many to Kensington Gardens, though it was only the second week in March. Mrs. Jennings and Elinor were of the number ; but Marianne, who knew that the Willoughbys were again in town, and had a constant dread of meeting them, chose rather to stay at home than venture into so public a place.

An intimate acquaintance of Mrs. Jennings joined them soon after they entered the Gardens ; and Elinor was not sorry that by her continuing with them and engaging all Mrs. Jennings's conversation, she was herself left to quiet reflection. She saw

nothing of the Willoughbys, nothing of Edward, and for some time nothing of anybody who could by any chance, whether grave or gay, be interesting to her. But at last she found herself, with some surprise, accosted by Miss Steele, who, though looking rather shy, expressed great satisfaction in meeting them; and on receiving encouragement from the particular kindness of Mrs. Jennings, left her own party for a short time to join theirs. Mrs. Jennings immediately whispered to Elinor,—

“Get it all out of her, my dear. She will tell you anything, if you ask. You see I cannot leave Mrs. Clarke.”

It was lucky, however, for Mrs. Jennings’s curiosity, and for Elinor’s too, that she would tell anything without being asked, for nothing would otherwise have been learned.

“I am so glad to meet you,” said Miss Steele, taking her familiarly by the arm, “for I wanted to see you of all things in the world.” And then lowering her voice, “I suppose Mrs. Jennings has heard all about it. Is she angry?”

“Not at all, I believe, with you.”

“That is a good thing. And Lady Middleton, is she angry?”

“I cannot suppose it possible that she should.”

“I am monstrous glad of it. Good gracious! I have had such a time of it! I never saw Lucy in such a rage in my life. She vowed at first she would never trim me up a new bonnet, nor do anything else for me again, so long as she lived; but now she is quite come to, and we are as good friends as ever. Look, she made me this bow to my hat, and put in the feather last night. There now, *you* are going to laugh at me too. But why should not I wear pink

ribbons ? I do not care if it *is* the doctor's favourite colour. I am sure, for my part, I should never have known he *did* like it better than any other colour if he had not happened to say so. My cousins have been so plaguing me ! I declare, sometimes I do not know which way to look before them."

She had wandered away to a subject on which Elinor had nothing to say, and therefore soon judged it expedient to find her way back again to the first.

" Well, but Miss Dashwood," speaking triumphantly, " people may say what they choose about Mr. Ferrars's declaring he would not have Lucy, for it's no such thing, I can tell you ; and it's quite a shame for such ill-natured reports to be spread abroad. Whatever Lucy might think about it herself, you know, it was no business of other people to set it down for certain."

" I never heard anything of the kind hinted at before, I assure you," said Elinor.

" Oh, did not you ? But it *was* said, I know very well, and by more than one ; for Miss Godby told Miss Sparks that nobody in their senses could expect Mr. Ferrars to give up a woman like Miss Morton, with thirty thousand pounds to her fortune, for Lucy Steele, that had nothing at all ; and I had it from Miss Sparks myself. And besides that, my cousin Richard said himself that when it came to the point he was afraid Mr. Ferrars would be off ; and when Edward did not come near us for three days, I could not tell what to think myself. And I believe in my heart Lucy gave it all up for lost ; for we came away from your brother's Wednesday, and we saw nothing of him not all Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and did not know what was become with him. Once Lucy thought to write to him, but then her spirit rose

against that. However, this morning he came just as we came home from church ; and then it all came out—how he had been sent for Wednesday to Harley Street, and been talked to by his mother and all of them, and how he had declared before them all that he loved nobody but Lucy, and nobody but Lucy would he have. And how he had been so worried by what passed, that as soon as he had went away from his mother's house he had got upon his horse, and rid into the country, somewhere or other ; and how he had stayed about at an inn all Thursday and Friday, on purpose to get the better of it. And after thinking it all over and over again, he said it seemed to him as if, now he had no fortune, and no nothing at all, it would be quite unkind to keep her on to the engagement, because it must be for her loss, for he had nothing but two thousand pounds, and no hope of anything else ; and if he was to go into orders, as he had some thoughts, he could get nothing but a curacy ; and how was they to live upon that ? He could not bear to think of her doing no better, and so he begged, if she had the least mind for it, to put an end to the matter directly, and leave him to shift for himself. I heard him say all this as plain as could possibly be. And it was entirely for her sake, and upon her account, that he said a word about being off, and not upon his own. I will take my oath he never dropped a syllable of being tired of her, or of wishing to marry Miss Morton, or anything like it. But, to be sure, Lucy would not give ear to such kind of talking ; so she told him directly (with a great deal about sweet and love, you know, and all that. Oh, la ! one can't repeat such kind of things, you know)—she told him directly she had not the least mind in the world to be off, for she could live with

him upon a trifle, and how little soever he might have she should be very glad to have it all, you know, or something of the kind. So then he was monstrous happy, and they talked on some time about what they should do, and they agreed he should take orders directly, and they must wait to be married till he got a living. And just then I could not hear any more, for my cousin called from below to tell me Mrs. Richardson was come in her coach, and would take one of us to Kensington Gardens; so I was forced to go into the room and interrupt them, to ask Lucy if she would like to go, but she did not care to leave Edward; so I just run upstairs and put on a pair of silk stockings, and came off with the Richardsons."

"I do not understand what you mean by interrupting them," said Elinor; "you were all in the same room together, were not you?"

"No, indeed, not us. La! Miss Dashwood, do you think people make love when anybody else is by? Oh, for shame! To be sure you must know better than that" (laughing affectedly). "No, no; they were shut up in the drawing-room together, and all I heard was only by listening at the door."

"How!" cried Elinor; "have you been repeating to me what you only learned yourself by listening at the door? I am sorry I did not know it before, for I certainly would not have suffered you to give me particulars of a conversation which you ought not to have known yourself. How could you behave so unfairly by your sister?"

"Oh la! there is nothing in *that*. I only stood at the door and heard what I could. And I am sure Lucy would have done just the same by me; for a year or two back, when Martha Sharpe and I had so many secrets together, she never made any bones

of hiding in a closet, or behind a chimney-board, on purpose to hear what we said."

Elinor tried to talk of something else ; but Miss Steele could not be kept beyond a couple of minutes from what was uppermost in her mind.

" Edward talks of going to Oxford soon," said she ; " but now he is lodging at No. — Pall Mall. What an ill-natured woman his mother is, an't she ? And your brother and sister were not very kind ! However, I shan't say anything against them to you ; and to be sure they did send us home in their own chariot, which was more than I looked for. And for my part, I was all in a fright for fear your sister should ask us for the huswifes she had gave us a day or two before ; but, however, nothing was said about them, and I took care to keep mine out of sight. Edward have got some business at Oxford, he says, so he must go there for a time ; and after that, as soon as he can light upon a bishop, he will be ordained. I wonder what curacy he will get ! Good gracious ! " —giggling as she spoke—" I'd lay my life I know what my cousins will say when they hear of it. They will tell me I should write to the doctor, to get Edward the curacy of his new living. I know they will ; but I am sure I would not do such a thing for all the world. ' La ! ' I shall say directly, ' I wonder how you could think of such a thing. I write to the doctor, indeed ! ' "

" Well," said Elinor, " it is a comfort to be prepared against the worst. You have got your answer ready."

Miss Steele was going to reply on the same subject, but the approach of her own party made another more necessary.

" Oh la ! here come the Richardsons. I had a vast deal more to say to you, but I must not stay away

from them any longer. I assure you they are very genteel people. He makes a monstrous deal of money, and they keep their own coach. I have not time to speak to Mrs. Jennings about it myself, but pray tell her I am quite happy to hear she is not in anger against us, and Lady Middleton the same; and if anything should happen to take you and your sister away, and Mrs. Jennings should want company, I am sure we should be very glad to come and stay with her for as long a time as she likes. I suppose Lady Middleton won't ask us any more this bout. Good-bye; I am sorry Miss Marianne was not here. Remember me kindly to her. La! if you have not got your spotted muslin on! I wonder you was not afraid of its being torn."

Such was her parting concern, for after this she had time only to pay her farewell compliments to Mrs. Jennings before her company was claimed by Mrs. Richardson; and Elinor was left in possession of knowledge which might feed her powers of reflection some time, though she had learned very little more than what had been already foreseen and foreplanned in her own mind. Edward's marriage with Lucy was as firmly determined on, and the time of its taking place remained as absolutely uncertain, as she had concluded it would be; everything depended, exactly after her expectation, on his getting that preferment, of which at present there seemed not the smallest chance.

As soon as they returned to the carriage, Mrs. Jennings was eager for information; but as Elinor wished to spread as little as possible intelligence that had in the first place been so unfairly obtained, she confined herself to the brief repetition of such simple particulars as she felt assured that Lucy, for

the sake of her own consequence, would choose to have known. The continuance of their engagement, and the means that were to be taken for promoting its end, was all her communication ; and this produced from Mrs. Jennings the following natural remark,—

“ Wait for his having a living ! ay, we all know how *that* will end. They will wait a twelvemonth, and finding no good comes of it, will set down upon a curacy of fifty pounds a year, with the interest of his two thousand pounds, and what little matter Mr. Steele and Mr. Pratt can give her. Then they will have a child every year ! and, Lord help 'em, how poor they will be ! I must see what I can give them towards furnishing their house. Two maids and two men, indeed, as I talked of t'other day ! No, no ; they must get a stout girl of all works. Betty's sister would never do for them now.”

The next morning brought Elinor a letter by the twopenny post from Lucy herself. It was as follows :—

“ BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS, *March*.

“ I hope my dear Miss Dashwood will excuse the liberty I take of writing to her ; but I know your friendship for me will make you pleased to hear such a good account of myself and my dear Edward, after all the troubles we have went through lately, therefore will make no more apologies, but proceed to say that, thank God ! though we have suffered dreadfully, we are both quite well now, and as happy as we must always be in one another's love. We have had great trials and great persecutions, but, however, at the same time, gratefully acknowledge many friends, yourself not the least among them, whose great

kindness I shall always thankfully remember, as will Edward too, who I have told of it. I am sure you will be glad to hear, as likewise dear Mrs. Jennings, I spent two happy hours with him yesterday afternoon. He would not hear of our parting, though earnestly did I, as I thought my duty required, urge him to it for prudence sake, and would have parted for ever on the spot, would he consent to it; but he said it should never be—he did not regard his mother's anger while he could have my affections. Our prospects are not very bright to be sure; but we must wait, and hope for the best. He will be ordained shortly; and should it ever be in your power to recommend him to anybody that has a living to bestow, am very sure you will not forget us. And dear Mrs. Jennings too, trust she will speak a good word for us to Sir John, or Mr. Palmer, or any friend that may be able to assist us. Poor Anne was much to blame for what she did; but she did it for the best, so I say nothing. Hope Mrs. Jennings won't think it too much trouble to give us a call, should she come this way any morning; 'twould be a great kindness, and my cousins would be proud to know her. My paper reminds me to conclude; and begging to be most gratefully and respectfully remembered to her, and to Sir John and Lady Middleton, and the dear children, when you chance to see them, and love to Miss Marianne,

“I am,” etc., etc.

As soon as Elinor had finished it, she performed what she concluded to be its writer's real design, by placing it in the hands of Mrs. Jennings, who read it aloud with many comments of satisfaction and praise.

“Very well, indeed! How prettily she writes!

Ay, that was quite proper to let him be off if he would. That was just like Lucy. Poor soul! I wish I *could* get him a living, with all my heart. She calls me dear Mrs. Jennings, you see. She is a good-hearted girl as ever lived. Very well, upon my word. That sentence is very prettily turned. Yes, yes, I will go and see her, sure enough. How attentive she is, to think of everybody! Thank you, my dear, for showing it me. It is as pretty a letter as ever I saw, and does Lucy's head and heart great credit."

A Misunderstanding

[Mrs. Jennings, who is of a match-making disposition, is convinced that Colonel Brandon (afterwards the husband of Marianne) has proposed to Elinor.]

The Miss Dashwoods had now been rather more than two months in town, and Marianne's impatience to be gone increased every day. She sighed for the air, the liberty, the quiet of the country; and fancied that if any place could give her ease, Barton must do it. Elinor was hardly less anxious than herself for their removal, and only so much less bent on its being effected immediately as that she was conscious of the difficulties of so long a journey, which Marianne could not be brought to acknowledge. She began, however, seriously to turn her thoughts towards its accomplishment; and had already mentioned their wishes to their kind hostess, who resisted them with all the eloquence of her good-will, when a plan was suggested which, though detaining them from home yet a few weeks longer, appeared to Elinor altogether much more eligible than any other. The Palmers were to remove to Cleveland about the end of March for the Easter holidays; and Mrs. Jennings, with

both her friends, received a very warm invitation from Charlotte to go with them. This would not in itself have been sufficient for the delicacy of Miss Dashwood ; but it was enforced with so much real politeness by Mr. Palmer himself as, joined to the very great amendment of his manners towards them since her sister had been known to be unhappy, induced her to accept it with pleasure.

When she told Marianne what she had done, however, her first reply was not very auspicious.

"Cleveland !" she cried, with great agitation. "No, I cannot go to Cleveland."

"You forget," said Elinor gently, "that its situation is not—that it is not in the neighbourhood of——"

"But it is in Somersetshire. I cannot go into Somersetshire. There, where I looked forward to going ;—no, Elinor, you cannot expect me to go there."

Elinor would not argue upon the propriety of overcoming such feelings ; she only endeavoured to counteract them by working on others, and represented it, therefore, as a measure which would fix the time of her returning to that dear mother whom she so much wished to see in a more eligible, more comfortable manner, than any other plan could do, and perhaps without any greater delay. From Cleveland, which was within a few miles of Bristol, the distance to Barton was not beyond one day, though a long day's journey ; and their mother's servant might easily come there to attend them down ; and as there could be no occasion for their staying above a week at Cleveland, they might now be at home in little more than three weeks' time. As Marianne's affection for her mother was sincere, it must triumph, with little difficulty, over the imaginary evils she had started.

Mrs. Jennings was so far from being weary of her guests that she pressed them very earnestly to return with her again from Cleveland. Elinor was grateful for the attention, but it could not alter their design ; and their mother's concurrence being readily gained, everything relative to their return was arranged as far as it could be ; and Marianne found some relief in drawing up a statement of the hours that were yet to divide her from Barton.

“ Ah, colonel, I do not know what you and I shall do without the Miss Dashwoods,” was Mrs. Jennings's address to him when he first called on her after their leaving her was settled, “ for they are quite resolved upon going home from the Palmers ; and how forlorn we shall be when I come back ! Lord ! we shall sit and gape at one another as dull as two cats.”

Perhaps Mrs. Jennings was in hopes, by this vigorous sketch of their future ennui, to provoke him to make that offer which might give himself an escape from it ; and if so, she had soon afterwards good reason to think her object gained ; for on Elinor's moving to the window to take more expeditiously the dimensions of a print which she was going to copy for her friend, he followed her to it with a look of particular meaning, and conversed with her there for several minutes. The effect of his discourse on the lady, too, could not escape her observation ; for though she was too honourable to listen, and had even changed her seat, on purpose that she might *not* hear, to one close by the pianoforte, on which Marianne was playing, she could not keep herself from seeing that Elinor changed colour, attended with agitation, and was too intent on what he said to pursue her employment. Still further in confirma-

tion of her hopes, in the interval of Marianne's turning from one lesson to another, some words of the colonel's inevitably reached her ear, in which he seemed to be apologising for the badness of his house. This set the matter beyond a doubt. She wondered, indeed, at his thinking it necessary to do so, but supposed it to be the proper etiquette. What Elinor said in reply she could not distinguish, but judged, from the motion of her lips, that she did not think *that* any material objection; and Mrs. Jennings commended her in her heart for being so honest. They then talked on for a few minutes longer without her catching a syllable, when another lucky stop in Marianne's performance brought her these words in the colonel's calm voice,—

“ I am afraid it cannot take place very soon.”

Astonished and shocked at so unlover-like a speech, she was almost ready to cry out, “ Lord! what should hinder it? ” but, checking her desire, confined herself to this silent ejaculation,—

“ This is very strange! sure he need not wait to be older.”

This delay on the colonel's side, however, did not seem to offend or mortify his fair companion in the least; for on their breaking up the conference soon afterwards, and moving different ways, Mrs. Jennings very plainly heard Elinor say, and with a voice which showed her to feel what she said,—

“ I shall always think myself very much obliged to you.”

Mrs. Jennings was delighted with her gratitude, and only wondered that, after hearing such a sentence, the colonel should be able to take leave of them, as he immediately did, with the utmost *sang-froid*, and go away without making her any reply! She had

not thought her old friend could have made so indifferent a suitor.

What had really passed between them was to this effect.

“ I have heard,” said he, with great compassion, “ of the injustice your friend Mr. Ferrars has suffered from his family ; for if I understand the matter right, he has been entirely cast off by them for persevering in his engagement with a very deserving young woman. Have I been rightly informed ? Is it so ? ”

Elinor told him that it was.

“ The cruelty, the impolitic cruelty,” he replied, with great feeling, “ of dividing, or attempting to divide, two young people long attached to each other is terrible. Mrs. Ferrars does not know what she may be doing—what she may drive her son to. I have seen Mr. Ferrars two or three times in Harley Street, and am much pleased with him. He is not a young man with whom one can be intimately acquainted in a short time, but I have seen enough of him to wish him well for his own sake, and as a friend of yours I wish it still more. I understand that he intends to take orders. Will you be so good as to tell him that the living of Delaford, now just vacant, as I am informed by this day’s post, is his, if he think it worth his acceptance ? But *that*, perhaps, so unfortunately circumstanced as he is now, it may be nonsense to appear to doubt ; I only wish it were more valuable. It is a rectory, but a small one—the late incumbent, I believe, did not make more than £200 per annum ; and though it is certainly capable of improvement, I fear not to such an amount as to afford him a very comfortable income. Such as it is, however, my pleasure in presenting him to it will be very great. Pray assure him of it.”

Elinor's astonishment at this commission could hardly have been greater had the colonel been really making her an offer of his hand. The preferment, which only two days before she had considered as hopeless for Edward, was already provided to enable him to marry, and she, of all people in the world, was fixed on to bestow it! Her emotion was such as Mrs. Jennings had attributed to a very different cause; but whatever minor feelings less pure, less pleasing, might have a share in that emotion, her esteem for the general benevolence, and her gratitude for the particular friendship, which together prompted Colonel Brandon to this act, were strongly felt and warmly expressed. She thanked him for it with all her heart, spoke of Edward's principles and disposition with that praise which she knew them to deserve, and promised to undertake the commission with pleasure, if it were really his wish to put off so agreeable an office to another. But at the same time she could not help thinking that no one could so well perform it as himself. It was an office, in short, from which, unwilling to give Edward the pain of receiving an obligation from her, she would have been very glad to be spared herself; but Colonel Brandon, on motives of equal delicacy, declining it likewise, still seemed so desirous of its being given through her means that she would not, on any account, make further opposition. Edward, she believed, was still in town, and fortunately she had heard his address from Miss Steele. She could undertake, therefore, to inform him of it in the course of the day. After this had been settled, Colonel Brandon began to talk of his own advantage in securing so respectable and agreeable a neighbour, and then it was that he mentioned, with regret, that

the house was small and indifferent ; an evil which Elinor, as Mrs. Jennings had supposed her to do, made very light of, at least as far as regarded its size.

“ The smallness of the house,” said she, “ I cannot imagine any inconvenience to them, for it will be in proportion to their family and income.”

By which the colonel was surprised to find that she was considering Mr. Ferrars’s marriage as the certain consequence of the presentation ; for he did not suppose it possible that Delaford living could supply such an income as anybody in his style of life would venture to settle on, and he said so.

“ This little rectory can do no more than make Mr. Ferrars comfortable as a bachelor ; it cannot enable him to marry. I am sorry to say that my patronage ends with this ; and my interest is hardly more extensive. If, however, by any unforeseen chance it should be in my power to serve him further, I must think very differently of him from what I now do, if I am not as ready to be useful to him then as I sincerely wish I could be at present. What I am now doing, indeed, seems nothing at all, since it can advance him so little towards what must be his principal, his only object of happiness. His marriage must still be a distant good ; at least I am afraid it cannot take place very soon.”

Such was the sentence which, when misunderstood, so justly offended the delicate feelings of Mrs. Jennings ; but after this narration of what really passed between Colonel Brandon and Elinor while they stood at the window, the gratitude expressed by the latter on their parting may perhaps appear, in general, not less reasonably excited, nor less properly worded, than if it had arisen from an offer of marriage.

Mrs. Jennings is Undeceived

“Well, Miss Dashwood,” said Mrs. Jennings, sagaciously smiling, as soon as the gentleman had withdrawn, “I do not ask you what the colonel has been saying to you ; for though, upon my honour, I *tried* to keep out of hearing, I could not help catching enough to understand his business, and I assure you I never was better pleased in my life, and I wish you joy of it with all my heart.”

“Thank you, ma’am,” said Elinor. “It is a matter of great joy to me, and I feel the goodness of Colonel Brandon most sensibly. There are not many men who would act as he has done—few people who have so compassionate a heart ! I never was more astonished in my life.”

“Lord ! my dear, you are very modest. I an’t the least astonished at it in the world, for I have often thought of late there was nothing more likely to happen.”

“You judged from your knowledge of the colonel’s general benevolence ; but at least you could not foresee that the opportunity would so very soon occur.”

“Opportunity !” repeated Mrs. Jennings. “Oh, as to that, when a man has once made up his mind to such a thing, somehow or other he will soon find an opportunity. Well, my dear, I wish you joy of it again and again ; and if ever there was a happy couple in the world, I think I shall soon know where to look for them.”

“You mean to go to Delaford after them, I suppose,” said Elinor, with a faint smile.

“Ay, my dear, that I do, indeed ; and as to the

house being a bad one, I do not know what the colonel would be at, for it is as good a one as ever I saw."

"He spoke of its being out of repair."

"Well, and whose fault is that? Why don't he repair it? Who should do it but himself?"

They were interrupted by the servant's coming in to announce the carriage being at the door; and Mrs. Jennings, immediately preparing to go, said,—

"Well, my dear, I must be gone before I have had half my talk out. But, however, we may have it all over in the evening, for we shall be quite alone. I do not ask you to go with me, for I daresay your mind is too full of the matter to care for company; and besides, you must long to tell your sister all about it."

Marianne had left the room before the conversation began.

"Certainly, ma'am, I shall tell Marianne of it; but I shall not mention it at present to anybody else."

"Oh, very well," said Mrs. Jennings, rather disappointed. "Then you would not have me tell it Lucy? for I think of going as far as Holborn to-day."

"No, ma'am, not even Lucy, if you please. One day's delay will not be very material; and till I have written to Mr. Ferrars, I think it ought not to be mentioned to anybody else. I shall do *that* directly. It is of importance that no time should be lost with him, for he will, of course, have much to do relative to his ordination."

This speech at first puzzled Mrs. Jennings exceedingly. Why Mr. Ferrars was to be written to about it in such a hurry she could not immediately comprehend. A few moments' reflection, however, produced a very happy idea, and she exclaimed,—

“ Oh ! I understand you. Mr. Ferrars is to be the man. Well, so much the better for him. Ay, to be sure, he must be ordained in readiness ; and I am very glad to find things are so forward between you. But, my dear, is not this rather out of character ? Should not the colonel write himself ? Sure, he is the proper person.”

Elinor did not quite understand the beginning of Mrs. Jennings’s speech, neither did she think it worth inquiring into, and therefore only replied to its conclusion.

“ Colonel Brandon is so delicate a man that he rather wished any one to announce his intentions to Mr. Ferrars than himself.”

“ And so *you* are forced to do it. Well, *that* is an odd kind of delicacy ! However, I will not disturb you ”—seeing her preparing to write. “ You know your own concerns best. So good-bye, my dear. I have not heard of anything to please me so well since Charlotte was brought to bed.”

And away she went ; but returning in a moment,—

“ I have just been thinking of Betty’s sister, my dear. I should be very glad to get her so good a mistress. But whether she would do for a lady’s maid, I am sure I can’t tell. She is an excellent housemaid, and works very well at her needle. However, you will think of all that at your leisure.”

“ Certainly, ma’am,” replied Elinor, not hearing much of what she said, and more anxious to be alone than to be mistress of the subject.

How she should begin—how she should express herself in her note to Edward—was now all her concern. The particular circumstances between them made a difficulty of that which to any other person would have been the easiest thing in the world ; but

she equally feared to say too much or too little, and sat deliberating over her paper, with the pen in her hand, till broken in on by the entrance of Edward himself.

He had met Mrs. Jennings at the door, on her way to the carriage, as he came to leave his farewell card ; and she, after apologising for not returning herself, had obliged him to enter, by saying that Miss Dashwood was above, and wanted to speak with him on very particular business.

Elinor had just been congratulating herself, in the midst of her perplexity, that however difficult it might be to express herself properly by letter, it was at least preferable to giving the information by word of mouth, when her visitor entered, to force her upon this greatest exertion of all. Her astonishment and confusion were very great on his so sudden appearance. She had not seen him before since his engagement became public, and therefore not since his knowing her to be acquainted with it ; which, with the consciousness of what she had been thinking of and what she had to tell him, made her feel particularly uncomfortable for some minutes. He, too, was much distressed ; and they sat down together in a most promising state of embarrassment. Whether he had asked her pardon for his intrusion on first coming into the room, he could not recollect ; but determining to be on the safe side, he made his apology in form as soon as he could say anything, after taking a chair.

“ Mrs. Jennings told me,” said he, “ that you wished to speak with me—at least I understood her so, or I certainly should not have intruded on you in such a manner ; though, at the same time, I should have been extremely sorry to leave London without seeing you and your sister, especially as it will most

likely be some time—it is not probable that I should soon have the pleasure of meeting you again. I go to Oxford to-morrow.”

“ You would not have gone, however,” said Elinor, recovering herself, and determined to get over what she so much dreaded as soon as possible, “ without receiving our good wishes, even if we had not been able to give them in person. Mrs. Jennings was quite right in what she said. I have something of consequence to inform you of, which I was on the point of communicating by paper. I am charged with a most agreeable office”—breathing rather faster than usual as she spoke. “ Colonel Brandon, who was here only ten minutes ago, has desired me to say that, understanding you mean to take orders, he has great pleasure in offering you the living of Delaford, now just vacant, and only wishes it were more valuable. Allow me to congratulate you on having so respectable and well-judging a friend, and to join in his wish that the living—it is about two hundred a year—were much more considerable, and such as might better enable you to—as might be more than a temporary accommodation to yourself—such, in short, as might establish all your views of happiness.”

What Edward felt, as he could not say it himself, it cannot be expected that any one else should say for him. He *looked* all the astonishment which such unexpected, such unthought-of information could not fail of exciting ; but he said only these two words,

“ Colonel Brandon ! ”

“ Yes,” continued Elinor, gathering more resolution, as some of the worst was over. “ Colonel Brandon means it as a testimony of his concern for what has lately passed, for the cruel situation in which

the unjustifiable conduct of your family has placed you—a concern which I am sure Marianne, myself, and all your friends must share; and likewise as a proof of his high esteem of your general character, and his particular approbation of your behaviour on the present occasion.”

“Colonel Brandon give *me* a living! Can it be possible?”

“The unkindness of your own relations has made you astonished to find friendship anywhere.”

“No,” replied he, with sudden consciousness, “not to find it in you; for I cannot be ignorant that to you, to your goodness, I owe it all. I feel it—I would express it if I could, but, as you well know, I am no orator.”

“You are very much mistaken. I do assure you that you owe it entirely, at least almost entirely, to your own merit, and Colonel Brandon’s discernment of it. I have had no hand in it. I did not even know, till I understood his design, that the living was vacant; nor had it ever occurred to me that he might have such a living in his gift. As a friend of mine, of my family, he may, perhaps—indeed I know he *has*—still greater pleasure in bestowing it; but, upon my word, you owe nothing to my solicitation.”

Truth obliged her to acknowledge some small share in the action; but she was, at the same time, so unwilling to appear as the benefactress of Edward, that she acknowledged it with hesitation,—which probably contributed to fix that suspicion in his mind which had recently entered it. For a short time he sat deep in thought, after Elinor had ceased to speak; at last, as if it were rather an effort, he said,—

“Colonel Brandon seems a man of great worth and

respectability. I have always heard him spoken of as such, and your brother, I know, esteems him highly. He is undoubtedly a sensible man, and in his manners perfectly the gentleman."

"Indeed," replied Elinor, "I believe that you will find him, on further acquaintance, all that you have heard him to be; and as you will be such very near neighbours (for I understand the parsonage is almost close to the mansion-house), it is particularly important that he *should* be all this."

Edward made no answer; but when she had turned away her head, gave her a look so serious, so earnest, so uncheerful, as seemed to say that he might hereafter wish the distance between the parsonage and the mansion-house much greater.

"Colonel Brandon, I think, lodges in St. James's Street," said he, soon afterwards, rising from his chair.

Elinor told him the number of the house.

"I must hurry away, then, to give him those thanks which you will not allow me to give you; to assure him that he has made me a very—an exceedingly happy man."

Elinor did not offer to detain him, and they parted, with a very earnest assurance on her side of her unceasing good wishes for his happiness in every change of situation that might befall him; on *his*, with rather an attempt to return the same good-will than the power of expressing it.

"When I see him again," said Elinor, to herself, as the door shut him out, "I shall see him the husband of Lucy."

And with this pleasing anticipation she sat down to reconsider the past, recall the words, and endeavour to comprehend all the feelings of Edward—and, of course, to reflect on her own with discontent.

When Mrs. Jennings came home, though she returned from seeing people whom she had never seen before, and of whom, therefore, she must have a great deal to say, her mind was so much more occupied by the important secret in her possession, than by anything else, that she reverted to it again as soon as Elinor appeared.

"Well, my dear," she cried, "I sent you up the young man. Did not I do right? And I suppose you had no great difficulty—you did not find him very unwilling to accept your proposal?"

"No, ma'am; *that* was not very likely."

"Well, and how soon will he be ready? for it seems all to depend upon that."

"Really," said Elinor, "I know so little of these kind of forms, that I can hardly even conjecture as to the time, or the preparation necessary; but I suppose two or three months will complete his ordination."

"Two or three months!" cried Mrs. Jennings. "Lord! my dear, how calmly you talk of it! And can the colonel wait two or three months? Lord bless me! I am sure it would put me quite out of patience! And though one would be very glad to do a kindness by poor Mr. Ferrars, I do think it is not worth while to wait two or three months for him. Sure, somebody else might be found that would do as well—somebody that is in orders already."

"My dear ma'am," said Elinor, "what can you be thinking of? Why, Colonel Brandon's only object is to be of use to Mr. Ferrars."

"Lord bless you, my dear! Sure you do not mean to persuade me that the colonel only marries you for the sake of giving ten guineas to Mr. Ferrars!"

The deception could not continue after this, and

an explanation immediately took place, by which both gained considerable amusement for the moment, without any material loss of happiness to either ; for Mrs. Jennings only exchanged one form of delight for another, and still without forfeiting her expectation of the first.

“ Ay, ay, the parsonage is but a small one,” said she, after the first ebullition of surprise and satisfaction was over, “ and very likely *may* be out of repair ; but to hear a man apologising, as I thought, for a house that to my knowledge has five sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, and I think the house-keeper told me could make up fifteen beds ! and to you, too, that had been used to live in Barton Cottage ! It seemed quite ridiculous. But, my dear, we must touch up the colonel to do something to the parsonage, and make it comfortable for them, before Lucy goes to it.”

“ But Colonel Brandon does not seem to have any idea of the living’s being enough to allow them to marry.”

“ The colonel is a ninny, my dear : because he has two thousand a year himself, he thinks that nobody else can marry on less. Take my word for it, that if I am alive I shall be paying a visit at Delaford Parsonage before Michaelmas ; and I am sure I shan’t go if Lucy an’t there.”

Elinor was quite of her opinion as to the probability of their not waiting for anything more.

Northanger Abbey

A Heroine's Childhood

[Catherine Morland, the daughter of a well-to-do country clergyman, gives no promise in her early years of the attractive girl that she is to become at sixteen.]

No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be a heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother, her own person and disposition, were all equally against her. Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard, and he had never been handsome. He had a considerable independence, besides two good livings, and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters. Her mother was a woman of useful plain sense, with a good temper, and, what is more remarkable, with a good constitution. She had three sons before Catherine was born ; and, instead of dying in bringing the latter into the world, as anybody might expect, she still lived on—lived to have six children more—to see them growing up around her, and to enjoy excellent health herself.

A family of ten children will be always called a fine family, where there are heads, and arms, and legs enough for the number ; but the Morlands had little other right to the word, for they were in general

very plain, and Catherine, for many years of her life, as plain as any. She had a thin, awkward figure, a sallow skin without colour, dark lank hair, and strong features; so much for her person, and not less unpropitious for heroism seemed her mind. She was fond of all boys' plays, and greatly preferred cricket, not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush. Indeed she had no taste for a garden, and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief, at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take.

Such were her propensities; her abilities were quite as extraordinary. She never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally, stupid. Her mother was three months in teaching her only to repeat the "Beggar's Petition," and, after all, her next sister Sally could say it better than she did. Not that Catherine was always stupid; by no means, she learned the fable of "The Hare and many Friends," as quickly as any girl in England. Her mother wished her to learn music; and Catherine was sure she should like it, for she was very fond of tinkling the keys of the old forlorn spinet, so at eight years old she began. She learned a year, and could not bear it; and Mrs. Morland, who did not insist on her daughters being accomplished in spite of incapacity or distaste, allowed her to leave off. The day which dismissed the music-master was one of the happiest of Catherine's life. Her taste for drawing was not superior; though, whenever she could obtain the outside of a letter from her mother,

or seize upon any other odd piece of paper, she did what she could in that way by drawing houses and trees, hens and chickens, all very much like one another. Writing and accounts she was taught by her father ; French by her mother. Her proficiency in either was not remarkable, and she shirked her lessons in both whenever she could.

What a strange, unaccountable character ! for with all these symptoms of profligacy at ten years old, she had neither a bad heart nor a bad temper, was seldom stubborn, scarcely ever quarrelsome, and very kind to the little ones, with few interruptions of tyranny. She was, moreover, noisy and wild, hated confinement and cleanliness, and loved nothing so well in the world as rolling down the green slope at the back of the house.

Such was Catherine Morland at ten. At fifteen appearances were mending ; she began to curl her hair and long for balls, her complexion improved, her features were softened by plumpness and colour, her eyes gained more animation, and her figure more consequence. Her love of dirt gave way to an inclination for finery, and she grew clean as she grew smart ; she had now the pleasure of sometimes hearing her father and mother remark on her personal improvement. “ Catherine grows quite a good-looking girl ; she is almost pretty to-day,” were words which caught her ears now and then ; and how welcome were the sounds ! To look *almost* pretty is an acquisition of higher delight to a girl who has been looking plain the first fifteen years of her life than a beauty from her cradle can ever receive.

Catherine goes to Bath

[Mr. and Mrs. Allen, some prosperous friends of the Morlands, invite Catherine to go with them on a visit to Bath.]

In addition to what has been already said of Catherine Morland's personal and mental endowments, when about to be launched into all the difficulties and dangers of a six weeks' residence in Bath, it may be stated, for the reader's more certain information, lest the following pages should otherwise fail of giving any idea of what her character is meant to be, that her heart was affectionate, her disposition cheerful and open, without conceit or affectation of any kind; her manners just removed from the awkwardness and shyness of a girl; her person pleasing, and, when in good looks, pretty; and her mind about as ignorant and uninformed as the female mind at seventeen usually is.

When the hour of departure drew near, the maternal anxiety of Mrs. Morland will be naturally supposed to be most severe. A thousand alarming presentiments of evil to her beloved Catherine from this terrific separation must oppress her heart with sadness, and drown her in tears for the last day or two of their being together; and advice of the most important and applicable nature must of course flow from her wise lips in their parting conference in her closet. Cautions against the violence of such noblemen and baronets as delight in forcing young ladies away to some remote farm-house, must, at such a moment, relieve the fulness of her heart. Who would not think so? But Mrs. Morland knew so little of lords

and baronets, that she entertained no notion of their general mischievousness, and was wholly unsuspecting of danger to her daughter from their machinations. Her cautions were confined to the following points : “ I beg, Catherine, you will always wrap yourself up very warm about the throat when you come from the rooms at night ; and I wish you would try to keep some account of the money you spend ; I will give you this little book on purpose.”

Sally, or rather Sarah, (for what young lady of common gentility will reach the age of sixteen without altering her name as far as she can ?) must from situation be at this time the intimate friend and confidante of her sister. It is remarkable, however, that she neither insisted on Catherine’s writing by every post, nor exacted her promise of transmitting the character of every new acquaintance, nor a detail of every interesting conversation that Bath might produce. Everything indeed, relative to this important journey was done on the part of the Morlands with a degree of moderation and composure, which seemed rather consistent with the common feelings of common life than with refined susceptibilities—the tender emotions which the first separation of a heroine from her family ought always to excite. Her father, instead of giving her an unlimited order on his banker, or even putting a hundred pounds’ bank-bill into her hands, gave her only ten guineas, and promised her more when she wanted it.

Under these unpromising auspices the parting took place and the journey began. It was performed with suitable quietness and uneventful safety. Neither robbers nor tempests befriended them, nor one lucky overturn to introduce them to the hero. Nothing more alarming occurred than a fear, on

Mrs. Allen's side, of having once left her clogs behind her at an inn, and that fortunately proved to be groundless.

They arrived at Bath. Catherine was all eager delight ; her eyes were here, there, everywhere, as they approached its fine and striking environs, and afterwards drove through those streets which conducted them to the hotel. She was come to be happy, and she felt happy already.

They were soon settled in comfortable lodgings in Pulteney Street.

It is now expedient to give some description of Mrs. Allen, that the reader may be able to judge in what manner her actions will hereafter tend to promote the general distress of the work, and how she will probably contribute to reduce poor Catherine to all the desperate wretchedness of which a last volume is capable—whether by her imprudence, vulgarity, or jealousy—whether by intercepting her letters, ruining her character, or turning her out of doors.

Mrs. Allen was one of that numerous class of females whose society can raise no other emotion than surprise at there being any men in the world who could like them well enough to marry them. She had neither beauty, genius, accomplishment, nor manner. The air of a gentlewoman, a great deal of quiet, inactive good temper, and a trifling turn of mind, were all that could account for her being the choice of a sensible, intelligent man like Mr. Allen. In one respect she was admirably fitted to introduce a young lady into public, being as fond of going everywhere and seeing everything herself as any young lady could be. Dress was her passion. She had a most harmless delight in being fine ; and our heroine's entrée into life could not take place till

after three or four days had been spent in learning what was mostly worn, and her chaperon was provided with a dress of the newest fashion. Catherine, too, made some purchases herself; and when all these matters were arranged, the important evening came which was to usher her into the Upper Rooms. Her hair was cut and dressed by the best hand, her clothes put on with care, and Mrs. Allen and her maid declared she looked quite as she should do. With such encouragement, Catherine hoped at least to pass uncensured through the crowd. As for admiration, it was always very welcome when it came, but she did not depend on it.

Mrs. Allen was so long in dressing that they did not enter the ball-room till late. The season was full, the room crowded, and the two ladies squeezed in as well as they could. As for Mr. Allen, he repaired directly to the card-room, and left them to enjoy a mob by themselves. With more care for the safety of her new gown, than for the comfort of her protégée, Mrs. Allen made her way through the throng of men by the door, as swiftly as the necessary caution would allow; Catherine, however, kept close at her side, and linked her arm too firmly within her friend's to be torn asunder by any common effort of a struggling assembly. But, to her utter amazement, she found that to proceed along the room was by no means the way to disengage themselves from the crowd; it seemed rather to increase as they went on; whereas she had imagined that, when once fairly within the door, they should easily find seats, and be able to watch the dances with perfect convenience. But this was far from being the case; and though by unwearied diligence they gained even the top of the room, their situation was just the same; they saw

nothing of the dancers but the high feathers of some of the ladies. Still they moved on: something better was yet in view; and by a continued exertion of strength and ingenuity, they found themselves at last in the passage behind the highest bench. Here there was something less of crowd than below; and hence Miss Morland had a comprehensive view of all the company beneath her, and of all the dangers of her late passage through them. It was a splendid sight; and she began, for the first time that evening, to feel herself at a ball; she longed to dance, but she had not an acquaintance in the room. Mrs. Allen did all that she could do in such a case, by saying very placidly, every now and then, "I wish you could dance, my dear; I wish you could get a partner." For some time her young friend felt obliged to her for these wishes, but they were repeated so often, and proved so totally ineffectual, that Catherine grew tired at last, and would thank her no more.

They were not long able, however, to enjoy the repose of the eminence they had so laboriously gained. Everybody was shortly in motion for tea, and they must squeeze out like the rest. Catherine began to feel something of disappointment; she was tired of being continually pressed against by people, the generality of whose faces possessed nothing to interest, and with all of whom she was so wholly unacquainted that she could not relieve the irksomeness of imprisonment by the exchange of a syllable with any of her fellow-captives; and when at last arrived in the tea-room, she felt yet more the awkwardness of having no party to join, no acquaintance to claim, no gentleman to assist them. They saw nothing of Mr. Allen; and after looking about them in vain for a more eligible situation, were obliged to sit down at the end

of a table, at which a large party were already placed, without having anything to do there, or anybody to speak to, except each other.

Mrs. Allen congratulated herself, as soon as they were seated, on having preserved her gown from injury. "It would have been very shocking to have it torn," said she, "would it not? It is such a delicate muslin. For my part, I have not seen anything I like so well in the whole room, I assure you.

"How uncomfortable it is," whispered Catherine, "not to have a single acquaintance here!"

"Yes, my dear," replied Mrs. Allen, with perfect serenity, "it is very uncomfortable, indeed."

"What shall we do? The gentlemen and ladies at this table look as if they wondered why we came here; we seem forcing ourselves into their party."

"Ay, so we do. That is very disagreeable. I wish we had a large acquaintance here."

"I wish we had *any*; it would be somebody to go to."

"Very true, my dear; and if we knew anybody, we would join them directly. The Skinners were here last year; I wish they were here now."

"Had not we better go away as it is? Here are no tea-things for us, you see."

"No more there are, indeed. How very provoking! But I think we had better sit still, for one gets so tumbled in such a crowd. How is my head, my dear? Somebody gave me a push that has hurt it I am afraid."

"No, indeed, it looks very nice. But, dear Mrs. Allen, are you sure there is nobody you know in all this multitude of people? I think you *must* know somebody."

"I don't, upon my word; I wish I did. I wish I

had a large acquaintance here with all my heart, and then I should get you a partner. I should be so glad to have you dance. There goes a strange-looking woman ! What an odd gown she has got on ! How old-fashioned it is ! Look at the back."

After some time they received an offer of tea from one of their neighbours ; it was thankfully accepted, and this introduced a light conversation with the gentleman who offered it, which was the only time that anybody spoke to them during the evening, till they were discovered and joined by Mr. Allen when the dance was over.

" Well, Miss Morland," said he, directly, " I hope you have had an agreeable ball."

" Very agreeable, indeed," she replied, vainly endeavouring to hide a great yawn.

" I wish she had been able to dance," said his wife ; " I wish we could have got a partner for her. I have been saying how glad I should be if the Skinners were here this winter instead of last ; or if the Parrys had come, as they talked of once, she might have danced with George Parry. I am so sorry she has not had a partner.

" We shall do better another evening, I hope," was Mr. Allen's consolation.

The company began to disperse when the dancing was over ; enough to leave space for the remainder to walk about in some comfort ; and now was the time for a heroine, who had not yet played a very distinguished part in the events of the evening, to be noticed and admired. Every five minutes, by removing some of the crowd, gave greater openings for her charms. She was now seen by many young men who had not been near her before. Not one, however, started with rapturous wonder on beholding

her, no whisper of eager inquiry ran round the room, nor was she once called a divinity by anybody. Yet Catherine was in very good looks, and, had the company only seen her three years before, they would now have thought her exceedingly handsome.

She was looked at, however, and with some admiration ; for, in her own hearing, two gentlemen pronounced her to be a pretty girl. Such words had their due effect ; she immediately thought the evening pleasanter than she had found it before, her humble vanity was contented ; she felt more obliged to the two young men for this simple praise, than a true quality heroine would have been for fifteen sonnets in celebration of her charms, and went to her chair in good humour with everybody, and perfectly satisfied with her share of public attention.

Catherine and Isabella Thorpe

[At Bath Catherine makes friends with Isabella Thorpe, whose mother is an old schoolfellow of Mrs. Allen. While amusing themselves in the forenoon, they meet their respective brothers, who are college friends.]

The following conversation, which took place between the two friends in the Pump-room one morning, after an acquaintance of eight or nine days, is given as a specimen of their very warm attachment, and of the delicacy, discretion, originality of thought, and literary taste which marked the reasonableness of that attachment.

They met by appointment ; and as Isabella had arrived nearly five minutes before her friend, her first address naturally was : “ My dearest creature, what can have made you so late ? ” I have been waiting for you at least this age ! ”

"Have you, indeed! I am very sorry for it, but really I thought I was in very good time. It is but just one. I hope you have not been here long?"

"Oh! these ten ages at least. I am sure I have been here this half-hour. But now let us go and sit down at the other end of the room and enjoy ourselves. I have a hundred things to say to you. In the first place, I was so afraid it would rain this morning just as I wanted to set off; it looked very showery, and that would have thrown me into agonies! Do you know I saw the prettiest hat you can imagine in a shop-window in Milsom Street just now; very like yours, only with coquelicot ribands instead of green; I quite longed for it. But, my dearest Catherine, what have you been doing with yourself all this morning? Have you gone on with 'Udolpho'?"

"Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil."

"Are you indeed? How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the black veil for the world! Are you not wild to know?"

"Oh! yes, quite; what can it be? But do not tell me: I would not be told upon any account. I know it must be a skeleton; I am sure it is *Laurentina's* skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life in reading it, I assure you; if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all the world."

"Dear creature! how much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished 'Udolpho,' we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you."

"Have you, indeed! How glad I am! What are they all?"

"I will read you their names directly; here they

are in my pocket-book. 'Castle of Wolfenbach,' 'Clermont,' 'Mysterious Warnings,' 'Necromancer of the Black Forest,' 'Midnight Bell,' 'Orphan of the Rhine,' and 'Horrid Mysteries.' Those will last us some time."

"Yes; pretty well; but are they all horrid? Are you sure they are all horrid?"

"Yes, quite sure; for a particular friend of mine, a Miss Andrews, a sweet girl, one of the sweetest creatures in the world, has read every one of them. I wish you knew Miss Andrews, you would be delighted with her. She is netting herself the sweetest cloak you can conceive. I think her as beautiful as an angel, and I am so vexed with the men for not admiring her! I scold them all amazingly about it."

"Scold them! Do you scold them for not admiring her?"

"Yes, that I do. There is nothing I would not do for those who are really my friends. I have no notion of loving people by halves; it is not my nature. My attachments are always excessively strong. I told Captain Hunt, at one of our assemblies this winter, that if he was to tease me all night, I would not dance with him, unless he would allow Miss Andrews to be as beautiful as an angel. The men think us incapable of real friendship, you know; and I am determined to show them the difference. Now, if I were to hear anybody speak slightly of you, I should fire up in a moment: but that is not at all likely, for *you* are just the kind of girl to be a great favourite with the men."

"Oh, dear!" cried Catherine, colouring, "how can you say so?"

"I know you very well; you have so much

animation, which is exactly what Miss Andrews wants ; for I must confess there is something amazingly insipid about her. Oh ! I must tell you, that, just after we parted yesterday, I saw a young man looking at you so earnestly ; I am sure he is in love with you." Catherine coloured, and disclaimed again. Isabella laughed. " It is very true, upon my honour ; but I see how it is : you are indifferent to everybody's admiration, except that of one gentleman, who shall be nameless. Nay, I cannot blame you (speaking more seriously)—your feelings are easily understood. Where the heart is really attached, I know very well how little one can be pleased, with the attention of anybody else. Everything is so insipid, so uninteresting, that does not relate to the beloved object ! I can perfectly comprehend your feelings."

" But you should not persuade me that I think so very much about Mr. Tilney ; for perhaps I may never see him again."

" Not see him again ! My dearest creature, do not talk of it. I am sure you would be miserable if you thought so."

" No, indeed ; I should not. I do not pretend to say that I was not very much pleased with him ; but while I have ' Udolpho ' to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh ! the dreadful black veil ! My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina's skeleton behind it."

" It is so odd to me that you should never have read ' Udolpho ' before ; but I suppose Mrs. Morland objects to novels."

" No, she does not. She very often reads ' Sir Charles Grandison ' herself ; but new books do not fall in our way."

“ ‘ Sir Charles Grandison ’ ! That is an amazing horrid book, is it not ? I remember Miss Andrews could not get through the first volume.”

“ It is not like ‘ Udolpho ’ at all ; but yet I think it is very entertaining.”

“ Do you indeed ! you surprise me ; I thought it had not been readable. But, my dearest Catherine, have you settled what to wear on your head to-night ? I am determined, at all events, to be dressed exactly like you. The men take notice of *that* sometimes, you know.”

“ But it does not signify if they do,” said Catherine, very innocently.

“ Signify ! oh, heavens ! I make it a rule never to mind what they say. They are very often amazingly impertinent, if you do not treat them with spirit, and make them keep their distance.”

“ Are they ? Well, I never observed *that*. They always behave very well to me.”

“ Oh ! they give themselves such airs. They are the most conceited creatures in the world, and think themselves of so much importance ! By the bye, though I have thought of it a hundred times, I have always forgot to ask you what is your favourite complexion in a man. Do you like them best dark or fair ? ”

“ I hardly know. I never much thought about it. Something between both, I think—brown : not fair, and not very dark.”

“ Very well, Catherine. That is exactly he. I have not forgot your description of Mr. Tilney : ‘ a brown skin, with dark eyes, and rather dark hair.’ Well, my taste is different. I prefer light eyes ; and as to complexion, do you know, I like a sallow better than any other. You must not betray me, if you

should ever meet with one of your acquaintance answering that description."

"Betray you! What do you mean?"

"Nay, do not distress me. I believe I have said too much. Let us drop the subject."

Catherine, in some amazement, complied; and, after remaining a few moments silent, was on the point of reverting to what interested her at that time rather more than anything else in the world, Laurentina's skeleton; when her friend prevented her, by saying: "For Heaven's sake! let us move away from this end of the room. Do you know, there are two odious young men who have been staring at me this half-hour. They really put me quite out of countenance. Let us go and look at the arrivals. They will hardly follow us there."

Away they walked to the book; and while Isabella examined the names, it was Catherine's employment to watch the proceedings of these alarming young men.

"They are not coming this way, are they? I hope they are not so impertinent as to follow us. Pray let me know if they are coming. I am determined I will not look up."

In a few moments Catherine, with unaffected pleasure, assured her that she need not be longer uneasy, as the gentlemen had just left the Pump-room.

"And which way are they gone?" said Isabella, turning hastily round. "One was a very good-looking young man."

"They went towards the churchyard."

"Well, I am amazingly glad I have got rid of them! And now what say you to going to Edgar's Buildings with me, and looking at my new hat? You said you should like to see it."

Catherine readily agreed. "Only," she added, "perhaps we may overtake the two young men."

"Oh! never mind that. If we make haste, we shall pass by them presently, and I am dying to show you my hat."

"But if we only wait a few minutes, there will be no danger of our seeing them at all."

"I shall not pay them any such compliment, I assure you. I have no notion of treating men with such respect. *That* is the way to spoil them."

Catherine had nothing to oppose against such reasoning; and therefore, to show the independence of Miss Thorpe, and her resolution of humbling the sex, they set off immediately, as fast as they could walk, in pursuit of the two young men.

Half a minute conducted them through the Pump-yard to the archway, opposite Union Passage; but here they were stopped. Everybody acquainted with Bath may remember the difficulties of crossing Cheap Street at this point; it is indeed a street of so impertinent a nature, so unfortunately connected with the great London and Oxford roads, and the principal inn of the city, that a day never passes in which parties of ladies, however important their business, whether in quest of pastry, millinery, or even (as in the present case) of young men, are not detained on one side or other by carriages, horsemen or carts. This evil had been felt and lamented, at least three times a day, by Isabella since her residence in Bath; and she was now fated to feel and lament it once more; for at the very moment of coming opposite to Union Passage, and within view of the two gentlemen who were proceeding through the crowds and treading the gutters of that interesting alley, they were prevented crossing by the approach of a

gig, driven along on bad pavement by a most knowing-looking coachman, with all the vehemence that could most fitly endanger the lives of himself, his companion, and his horse.

“ Oh, these odious gigs ! ” said Isabella, looking up, “ how I detest them ! ” But this detestation, though so just, was of short duration, for she looked again, and exclaimed, “ Delightful ! Mr. Morland and my brother ! ”

“ Good Heaven ! ’tis James ! ” was uttered at the same moment by Catherine ; and on catching the young men’s eyes, the horse was immediately checked with a violence which almost threw him on his haunches ; and the servant having now scampered up, the gentlemen jumped out, and the equipage was delivered to his care.

Catherine, by whom this meeting was wholly unexpected, received her brother with the liveliest pleasure ; and he, being of a very amiable disposition, and sincerely attached to her, gave every proof on his side of equal satisfaction, which he could have leisure to do, while the bright eyes of Miss Thorpe were incessantly challenging his notice ; and to her his devoirs were speedily paid, with a mixture of joy and embarrassment which might have informed Catherine, had she been more expert in the development of other people’s feelings, and less simply engrossed by her own, that her brother thought her friend quite as pretty as she could do herself.

John Thorpe, who, in the meantime, had been giving orders about the horse, soon joined them, and from him she directly received the amends which were her due ; for while he slightly and carelessly touched the hand of Isabella, on her he bestowed a whole scrape and half a short bow. He was a stout

young man, of middling height, who, with a plain face and ungraceful form, seemed fearful of being too handsome, unless he wore the dress of a groom, and too much like a gentleman unless he were easy where he ought to be civil, and impudent where he might be allowed to be easy. He took out his watch: "How long do you think we have been running it from Tetbury, Miss Morland?"

"I do not know the distance." Her brother told her that it was twenty-three miles.

"*Three-and-twenty!*" cried Thorpe; "five-and-twenty if it is an inch." Morland remonstrated, pleaded the authority of road-books, innkeepers, and milestones; but his friend disregarded them all; he had a surer test of distance. "I know it must be five-and-twenty," said he, "by the time we have been doing it. It is now half after one; we drove out of the inn-yard at Tetbury as the town-clock struck eleven; and I defy any man in England to make my horse go less than ten miles an hour in harness; that makes it exactly twenty-five."

"You have lost an hour," said Morland; "it was only ten o'clock when we came from Tetbury."

"Ten o'clock! it was eleven, upon my soul! I counted every stroke. This brother of yours would persuade me out of my senses, Miss Morland; do but look at my horse; did you ever see an animal so made for speed in your life?" (The servant had just mounted the carriage and was driving off.) "Such true blood! Three hours and a half, indeed, coming only three-and-twenty miles! Look at that creature and suppose it possible, if you can."

"He *does* look very hot, to be sure!"

"Hot! he had not turned a hair till we came to Walcot Church: but look at his forehead; look at

his loins ; only see how he moves ; that horse *cannot* go less than ten miles an hour : tie his legs, and he will get on. What do you think of my gig, Miss Morland ? A neat one, is it not ? Well hung ; town built : I have not had it a month. It was built for a Christ Church man, a friend of mine, a very good sort of fellow ; he ran it a few weeks, till, I believe, it was convenient to have done with it. I happened just then to be looking out for some light thing of the kind, though I had pretty well determined on a curricule too ; but I chanced to meet him on Magdalen Bridge, as he was driving into Oxford, last term : ‘ Ah, Thorpe,’ said he, ‘ do you happen to want such a little thing as this ? It is a capital one of the kind, but I am cursed tired of it.’ ‘ Oh, d——,’ said I, ‘ I am your man ; what do you ask ?’ And how much do you think he did, Miss Morland ? ”

“ I am sure I cannot guess at all.”

“ Curricule-hung, you see ; seat, trunk, sword-case, splashing-board, lamps, silver moulding, all, you see, complete ; the iron-work as good as new, or better. He asked fifty guineas : I closed with him directly, threw down the money, and the carriage was mine.”

“ And I am sure,” said Catherine, “ I know so little of such things, that I cannot judge whether it was cheap or dear.”

“ Neither one nor t’other ; I might have got it for less, I dare say ; but I hate haggling, and poor Freeman wanted cash.”

“ That was very good-natured of you,” said Catherine, quite pleased.

“ Oh ! d—— it, when one has the means of doing a kind thing by a friend, I hate to be pitiful.”

An inquiry now took place into the intended movements of the young ladies ; and, on finding whither

they were going, it was decided that the gentlemen should accompany them to Edgar's Buildings, and pay their respects to Mrs. Thorpe. James and Isabella led the way; and so well satisfied was the latter with her lot, so contentedly was she endeavouring to ensure a pleasant walk to him who brought the double recommendation of being her brother's friend and her friend's brother, so pure and uncoquettish were her feelings, that, though they overtook, and passed the two offending young men in Milsom Street, she was so far from seeking to attract their notice, that she looked back at them only three times.

John Thorpe kept of course with Catherine, and, after a few minutes' silence, renewed the conversation about his gig: "You will find, however, Miss Morland, it would be reckoned a cheap thing by some people, for I might have sold it for ten guineas more the next day; Jackson, of Oriel, bid me sixty at once; Morland was with me at the time."

"Yes," said Morland, who overheard this; "but you forget that your horse was included."

"My horse! oh, d—— it! I would not sell my horse for a hundred. Are you fond of an open carriage, Miss Morland?"

"Yes, very; I have hardly ever an opportunity of being in one; but I am particularly fond of it."

"I am glad of it; I will drive you out in mine every day."

"Thank you," said Catherine, in some distress, from a doubt of the propriety of accepting such an offer.

"I will drive you up Lansdown Hill to-morrow."

"Thank you; but will not your horse want rest?"

"Rest! he has only come three-and-twenty miles to-day; all nonsense; nothing ruins horses so much

as rest ; nothing knocks them up so soon. No, no ; I shall exercise mine at the average of four hours every day while I am here."

" Shall you, indeed ! " said Catherine, very seriously, " that will be forty miles a day."

" Forty ! ay, fifty, for what I care. Well, I will drive you up Lansdown to-morrow ; mind, I am engaged."

" How delightful that will be ! " cried Isabella, turning round ; " my dearest Catherine, I quite envy you ; but I am afraid, brother, you will not have room for a third."

" A third, indeed ! no, no ; I did not come to Bath to drive my sisters about ; that would be a good joke, faith ! Morland must take care of you."

This brought on a dialogue of civilities between the other two ; but Catherine heard neither the particulars nor the result. Her companion's discourse now sunk from its hitherto animated pitch to nothing more than a short, decisive sentence of praise or condemnation on the face of every woman they met ; and Catherine, after listening and agreeing as long as she could, with all the civility and deference of the youthful female mind, fearful of hazarding an opinion of its own in opposition to that of a self-assured man, especially where the beauty of her own sex is concerned, ventured at length to vary the subject by a question which had been long uppermost in her thoughts ; it was, " Have you ever read ' Udolpho,' Mr. Thorpe ? "

" ' Udolpho ' ! oh, Lord ! not I ; I never read novels ; I have something else to do."

Catherine, humbled and ashamed, was going to apologise for her question ; but he prevented her by saying, " Novels are all so full of nonsense and

stuff ! there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since 'Tom Jones,' except the 'Monk' ; I read that t'other day ; but as for all the others, they are the stupidest things in creation."

"I think you must like 'Udolpho,' if you were to read it ; it is so very interesting."

"Not I, faith ! No, if I read any, it shall be Mrs. Radcliffe's ; her novels are amusing enough ; they are worth reading ; some fun and nature in *them*."

"'Udolpho' was written by Mrs. Radcliffe," said Catherine, with some hesitation, from the fear of mortifying him.

"No, sure ; was it ? Ay, I remember, so it was ; I was thinking of that other stupid book, written by that woman they made such a fuss about ; she who married the French emigrant."

"I suppose you mean 'Camilla' ? "

"Yes, that's the book ; such unnatural stuff ! An old man playing at see-saw ; I took up the first volume once, and looked it over, but I soon found it would not do ; indeed, I guessed what sort of stuff it must be before I saw it ; as soon as I heard she had married an emigrant, I was sure I should never be able to get through it."

"I have never read it."

"You had no loss, I assure you ; it is the horriddest nonsense you can imagine ; there is nothing in the world in it but an old man's playing at see-saw and learning Latin ; upon my soul, there is not."

This critique, the justness of which was unfortunately lost on poor Catherine, brought them to the door of Mrs. Thorpe's lodgings, and the feelings of the discerning and unprejudiced reader of "Camilla" gave way to the feelings of the dutiful and affectionate son, as they met Mrs. Thorpe, who had descried

them from above, in the passage. "Ah, mother, how do you do?" said he, giving her a hearty shake of the hand; "where did you get that quiz of a hat? it makes you look like an old witch. Here is Morland and I come to stay a few days with you; so you must look out for a couple of good beds somewhere near." And this address seemed to satisfy all the fondest wishes of the mother's heart, for she received him with the most delighted and exulting affection. On his two younger sisters he then bestowed an equal portion of his fraternal tenderness, for he asked each of them how they did, and observed that they both looked very ugly.

These manners did not please Catherine; but he was James's friend and Isabella's brother; and her judgment was further bought off by Isabella's assuring her, when they withdrew to see the new hat, that John thought her the most charming girl in the world, and by John's engaging her before they parted, to dance with him that evening. Had she been older or vainer, such attacks might have done little; but where youth and diffidence are united, it requires uncommon steadiness of reason to resist the attraction of being called the most charming girl in the world, and of being so very early engaged as a partner; and the consequence was, that when the two Morlands, after sitting an hour with the Thorpes, set off to walk together to Mr. Allen's, and James, as the door was closed on them said, "Well, Catherine, how do you like my friend Thorpe?" instead of answering, as she probably would have done, had there been no friendship and no flattery in the case, "I do not like him at all," she directly replied, "I like him very much; he seems very agreeable."

"He is as good-natured a fellow as ever lived; a

little of a rattle ; but that will recommend him to your sex, I believe ; and how do you like the rest of the family ? ”

“ Very, very much indeed : Isabella particularly.”

“ I am very glad to hear you say so ; she is just the kind of young woman I could wish to see you attached to ; she has so much good sense, and is so thoroughly unaffected and amiable ; I always wanted you to know her ; and she seems very fond of you. She said the highest things in your praise that could possibly be ; and the praise of such a girl as Miss Thorpe, even you, Catherine,” taking her hand with affection, “ may be proud of.”

“ Indeed I am,” she replied ; “ I love her exceedingly, and am delighted to find that you like her too. You hardly mentioned anything of her when you wrote to me after your visit there.”

“ Because I thought I should soon see you myself. I hope you will be a great deal together while you are in Bath. She is a most amiable girl ; such a superior understanding ! How fond all the family are of her ; she is evidently the general favourite ; and how much she must be admired in such a place as this. Is she not ? ”

“ Yes, very much indeed, I fancy ; Mr. Allen thinks her the prettiest girl in Bath.”

“ I dare say he does ; and I do not know any man who is a better judge of beauty than Mr. Allen. I need not ask you whether you are happy here, my dear Catherine ; with such a companion and friend as Isabella Thorpe, it would be impossible for you to be otherwise ; and the Allens, I am sure, are very kind to you.”

“ Yes, very kind ; I never was so happy before ; and now you are come it will be more delightful than

ever. How good it is of you to come so far on purpose to see *me* !”

James accepted this tribute of gratitude, and qualified his conscience for accepting it too, by saying with perfect sincerity, “ Indeed, Catherine, I love you dearly.”

Inquiries and communications concerning brothers and sisters, the situation of some, the growth of the rest, and other family matters, now passed between them, and continued, with only one small digression on James’s part, in praise of Miss Thorpe, till they reached Pulteney Street, where he was welcomed with great kindness by Mr. and Mrs. Allen, invited by the former to dine with them, and summoned by the latter to guess the price and weigh the merits of a new muff and tippet. A pre-engagement in Edgar’s Buildings prevented his accepting the invitation of one friend, and obliged him to hurry away as soon as he had satisfied the demands of the other. The time of the two parties uniting in the Octagon Room being correctly adjusted, Catherine was then left to the luxury of a raised, restless, and frightened imagination over the pages of “ Udolpho,” lost from all worldly concerns of dressing and dinner, incapable of soothing Mrs. Allen’s fears on the delay of an expected dressmaker, and having only one minute in sixty to bestow even on the reflection of her own felicity in being already engaged for the evening.

A Tiresome Admirer

[Catherine has been much charmed by a young clergyman named Henry Tilney, whom she eventually marries. She is annoyed by the blustering admiration of John Thorpe.]

The progress of Catherine's unhappiness from the events of the evening was as follows. It appeared first in a general dissatisfaction with everybody about her, while she remained in the rooms, which speedily brought on considerable weariness and a violent desire to go home. This, on arriving at Pulteney Street, took the direction of extraordinary hunger, and when that was appeased, changed into an earnest longing to be in bed. Such was the extreme point of her distress; for when there she immediately fell into a sound sleep, which lasted nine hours, and from which she awoke perfectly revived, in excellent spirits, with fresh hopes and fresh schemes. The first wish of her heart was to improve her acquaintance with Miss Tilney, and almost her first resolution to seek her for that purpose in the Pump-room at noon. In the Pump-room one so newly arrived in Bath must be met with; and that building she had already found so favourable for the discovery of female excellence, and the completion of female intimacy, so admirably adapted for secret discourses and unlimited confidence, that she was most reasonably encouraged to expect another friend from within its walls. Her plan for the morning thus settled, she sat quietly down to her book after breakfast, resolving to remain in the same place and the same employment till the clock struck one; and from

habitude very little incommoded by the remarks and ejaculations of Mrs. Allen, whose vacancy of mind, and incapacity for thinking, were such, that, as she never talked a great deal, so she could never be entirely silent; and, therefore, while she sat at her work, if she lost her needle, or broke her thread, if she heard a carriage in the street, or saw a speck upon her gown, she must observe it aloud, whether there were anyone at leisure to answer her or not. At about half-past twelve a remarkably loud rap drew her in haste to the window, and scarcely had she time to inform Catherine of there being two open carriages at the door, in the first only a servant, her brother driving Miss Thorpe in the second, before John Thorpe came running upstairs, calling out, "Well, Miss Morland, here I am. Have you been waiting long? We could not come before, the old devil of a coachmaker was such an eternity finding out a thing fit to be got into, and now it is ten thousand to one but they break down before we are out of the street. How do you do, Mrs. Allen? A famous ball last night, was not it? Come, Miss Morland, be quick, for the others are in a confounded hurry to be off. They want to get their tumble over."

"What do you mean?" said Catherine; "where are you all going to?"

"Going to! Why, you have not forgot our engagement? Did not we agree together to take a drive this morning? What a head you have! We are going up Claverton Down."

"Something was said about it, I remember," said Catherine, looking at Mrs. Allen for her opinion; "but really, I did not expect you."

"Not expect me! That's a good one! And what a dust you would have made if I had not come!"

Catherine's silent appeal to her friend, meanwhile, was entirely thrown away ; for Mrs. Allen, not being at all in the habit of conveying any expression herself by a look, was not aware of its being ever intended by anybody else ; and Catherine, whose desire of seeing Miss Tilney again, could at that moment bear a short delay in favour of a drive, and who thought there could be no impropriety in her going with Mr. Thorpe, as Isabella was going at the same time with James, was therefore obliged to speak plainer. " Well ma'am, what do you say to it ? Can you spare me for an hour or two ? Shall I go ? "

" Do just as you please, my dear," replied Mrs. Allen, with the most placid indifference. Catherine took the advice, and ran off to get ready. In a very few minutes, she reappeared, having scarcely allowed the two others time enough to get through a few short sentences in her praise, after Thorpe had procured Mrs. Allen's admiration of his gig, and then, receiving her friend's parting good wishes, both hurried downstairs. " My dearest creature," cried Isabella, to whom the duty of friendship immediately called her before she could get into the carriage, " you have been at least three hours getting ready : I was afraid you were ill. What a delightful ball we had last night ! I have a thousand things to say to you ; but make haste and get in, for I long to be off."

Catherine followed her orders and turned away, but not too soon to hear her friend exclaim aloud to James, " What a sweet girl she is ! I quite dote on her."

" You will not be frightened, Miss Morland," said Thorpe, as he handed her in, " if my horse should dance about a little at first setting off. He will most likely give a plunge or two, and perhaps take the rest

for a minute ; but he will soon know his master. He is full of spirits, playful as can be, but there is no vice in him."

Catherine did not think the portrait a very inviting one, but it was too late to retreat, and she was too young to own herself frightened ; so, resigning herself to her fate, and trusting to the animal's boasted knowledge of its owner, she sat peaceably down, and saw Thorpe sit down by her. Everything being then arranged, the servant, who stood at the horse's head, was bid in an important voice " to let him go," and off they went in the quietest manner imaginable, without a plunge or a caper, or anything like one. Catherine, delighted at so happy an escape, spoke her pleasure aloud with grateful surprise ; and her companion immediately made the matter perfectly simple by assuring her that it was entirely owing to the peculiarly judicious manner in which he had then held the reins, and the singular discernment and dexterity with which he had directed his whip. Catherine, though she could not help wondering that, with such perfect command of his horse, he should think it necessary to alarm her with a relation of its tricks, congratulated herself sincerely on being under the care of so excellent a coachman ; and perceiving that the animal continued to go on in the same quiet manner, without showing the smallest propensity towards any unpleasant vivacity, and (considering its inevitable pace was ten miles an hour) by no means alarmingly fast, gave herself up to all the enjoyment of air and exercise of the most invigorating kind in a fine mild day of February, with the consciousness of safety. A silence of several minutes succeeded their first short dialogue. It was broken by Thorpe's saying very abruptly, " Old Allen is as rich as a Jew,

is not he ? ” Catherine did not understand him, and he repeated his question, adding in explanation, “ Old Allen, the man you are with.”

“ Oh ! Mr. Allen you mean. Yes, I believe he is very rich.”

“ And no children at all ? ”

“ No, not any.”

“ A famous thing for his next heirs. He is your godfather, is not he ? ”

“ My godfather ! No.”

“ But you are always very much with them ? ”

“ Yes, very much.”

“ Ay, that is what I meant. He seems a good kind of old fellow enough, and has lived very well in his time, I dare say ; he is not gouty for nothing. Does he drink his bottle a day now ? ”

“ His bottle a day ! No. Why should you think of such a thing ? He is a very temperate man, and you could not fancy him in liquor last night ? ”

“ Lord help you ! You women are always thinking of men’s being in liquor. Why, you do not suppose a man is overset by a bottle ? I am sure of this, that if everybody was to drink their bottle a day, there would not be half the disorders in the world there are now. It would be a famous good thing for us all.”

“ I cannot believe it.”

“ Oh ! Lord, it would be the saving of thousands. There is not the hundredth part of the wine consumed in this kingdom that there ought to be. Our foggy climate wants help.”

“ And yet I have heard that there is a great deal of wine drunk in Oxford.”

“ Oxford ! There is no drinking at Oxford now, I assure you. Nobody drinks there. You would hardly meet with a man who goes beyond his four

pints at the utmost. Now, for instance, it was reckoned a remarkable thing at the last party in my rooms, that upon an average we cleared about five pints a head. It was looked upon as something out of the common way. *Mine* is famous good stuff, to be sure. You would not often meet with anything like it in Oxford, and that may account for it. But this will just give you a notion of the general rate of drinking there."

"Yes, it does give a notion," said Catherine, warmly, "and that is, that you all drink a great deal more wine than I thought you did. However, I am sure James does not drink so much."

This declaration brought on a loud and overpowering reply, of which no part was very distinct, except the frequent exclamations, amounting almost to oaths, which adorned it, and Catherine was left, when it ended, with rather a strengthened belief of there being a great deal of wine drunk in Oxford, and the same happy conviction of her brother's comparative sobriety.

Thorpe's ideas then all reverted to the merits of his own equipage, and she was called on to admire the spirit and freedom with which his horse moved along, and the ease which his paces, as well as the excellence of the springs, gave the motion of the carriage. She followed him in all his admiration as well as she could. To go before, or beyond him, was impossible. His knowledge and her ignorance of the subject, his rapidity of expression and her diffidence of herself, put that out of her power; she could strike out nothing new in commendation, but she readily echoed whatever he chose to assert, and it was finally settled between them, without any difficulty, that his equipage was altogether the most complete of its

kind in England, his carriage the neatest, his horse the best goer, and himself the best coachman. "You do not really think, Mr. Thorpe," said Catherine, venturing after some time to consider the matter as entirely decided, and to offer some little variation on the subject, "that James's gig will break down?"

"Break down! Oh, Lord! Did you ever see such a little tittuppy thing in your life? There is not a sound piece of iron about it. The wheels have been fairly worn out these ten years at least; and as for the body, upon my soul, you might shake it to pieces yourself with a touch. It is the most devilish little rickety business I ever beheld. Thank God! we have got a better. I would not be bound to go two miles in it for fifty thousand pounds."

"Good heavens!" cried Catherine, quite frightened; "then pray let us turn back; they will certainly meet with an accident if we go on. Do let us turn back, Mr. Thorpe; stop and speak to my brother, and tell him how very unsafe it is."

"Unsafe! Oh, Lord! what is there in that? They will only get a roll if it does break down; and there is plenty of dirt, it will be excellent falling. Oh, curse it! the carriage is safe enough if a man knows how to drive it; a thing of that sort in good hands will last above twenty years after it is fairly worn out. Lord bless you! I would undertake for five pounds to drive it to York and back again without losing a nail."

Catherine listened with astonishment. She knew not how to reconcile two such very different accounts of the same thing; for she had not been brought up to understand the propensities of a rattle, nor to know to how many idle assertions and impudent falsehoods the excess of vanity will lead. Her whole

family were plain matter-of-fact people, who seldom aimed at wit of any kind ; her father at the utmost being contented with a pun, and her mother with a proverb ; they were not in the habit, therefore, of telling lies to increase their importance, or of asserting at one moment what they would contradict the next. She reflected on the affair for some time in much perplexity, and was more than once on the point of requesting from Mr. Thorpe a clearer insight into his real opinion on the subject ; but she checked herself, because it appeared to her that he did not excel in giving those clearer insights, in making those things plain which he had before made ambiguous, and, joining to this the consideration that he would not really suffer his sister and his friend to be exposed to a danger from which he might easily preserve them, she concluded at last that he must know the carriage to be in fact perfectly safe, and therefore would alarm herself no longer. By him the whole matter seemed entirely forgotten ; and all the rest of his conversation, or rather talk, began and ended with himself and his own concerns. He told her of horses which he had bought for a trifle and sold for incredible sums ; of racing matches, in which his judgment had infallibly foretold the winner ; of shooting parties, in which he had killed more birds (though without having one good shot) than all his companions together ; and described to her some famous day's sport with the fox-hounds, in which his foresight and skill in directing the dogs had repaired the mistakes of the most experienced huntsman, and in which the boldness of his riding, though it had never endangered his own life for a moment, had been constantly leading others into difficulties, which, he calmly concluded, had broken the necks of many.

Little as Catherine was in the habit of judging for herself, and unfixed as were her general notions of what men ought to be, she could not entirely repress a doubt, while she bore with the effusions of his endless conceit, of his being altogether completely agreeable. It was a bold surmise, for he was Isabella's brother, and she had been assured by James that his manners would recommend him to all her sex ; but in spite of this, the extreme weariness of his company which crept over her before they had been out an hour, and which continued unceasingly to increase till they stopped in Pulteney Street again, induced her in some small degree to resist such high authority, and to distrust his powers of giving universal pleasure.

When they arrived at Mrs. Allen's door, the astonishment of Isabella was hardly to be expressed on finding that it was too late in the day for them to attend her friend into the house :—" Past three o'clock ! " it was inconceivable, incredible, impossible, and she would neither believe her own watch, nor her brother's, nor the servants ; she would believe no assurance of it founded on reason or reality, till Morland produced his watch and ascertained the fact : to have doubted a moment longer *then*, would have been equally inconceivable, incredible, and impossible, and she could only protest over and over again, that no two hours and a half had ever gone off so swiftly before, as Catherine was called on to confirm ; Catherine could not tell a falsehood even to please Isabella ; but the latter was spared the misery of her friend's dissenting voice by not waiting for her answer. Her own feelings entirely engrossed her ; her wretchedness was most acute on finding herself obliged to go directly home. It was ages since she had had a moment's conversation with her dearest Catherine, and though

she had such thousands of things to say to her, it appeared as if they were never to be together again ; so with smiles of most exquisite misery, and the laughing eye of utter despondency, she bade her friend adieu, and went on.

Catherine found Mrs. Allen just returned from all the busy idleness of the morning, and was immediately greeted with, " Well, my dear, here you are ! " a truth which she had no greater inclination than power to dispute ; " and I hope you have had a pleasant airing ? "

" Yes, ma'am, I thank you ; we could not have had a nicer day."

" So Mrs. Thorpe said. She was vastly pleased at your all going."

" You have seen Mrs. Thorpe, then ? "

" Yes ; I went to the Pump-room as soon as you were gone, and there I met her, and we had a great deal of talk together. She says there was hardly any veal to be got at market this morning, it is so uncommonly scarce."

" Did you see anybody else of our acquaintance ? "

" Yes ; we agreed to take a turn in the Crescent, and there we met Mrs. Hughes, and Mr. and Miss Tilney walking with her."

" Did you, indeed ? and did they speak to you ? "

" Yes ; we walked along the Crescent together for half an hour. They seem very agreeable people. Miss Tilney was in a very pretty spotted muslin, and I fancy, by what I can learn, that she always dresses very handsomely. Mrs. Hughes talked to me a great deal about the family."

" And what did she tell you of them ? "

" Oh ! a vast deal, indeed ; she hardly talked of anything else."

“Did she tell you what part of Gloucestershire they come from?”

“Yes, she did, but I cannot recollect now. But they are very good kind of people, and very rich. Mrs. Tilney was a Miss Drummond, and she and Mrs. Hughes were school-fellows; and Miss Drummond had a very large fortune, and, when she married, her father gave her twenty thousand pounds, and five hundred to buy wedding clothes. Mrs. Hughes saw all the clothes after they came from the warehouse.”

“And are Mr. and Mrs. Tilney in Bath?”

“Yes, I fancy they are, but I am not quite certain. Upon recollection, however, I have a notion they are both dead; at least the mother is; yes, I am sure Mrs. Tilney is dead, because Mrs. Hughes told me there was a very beautiful set of pearls that Mr. Drummond gave his daughter on her wedding-day, and that Miss Tilney has got them now, for they were put by for her when her mother died.”

“And is Mr. Tilney, my partner, the only son?”

“I cannot be quite positive about that, my dear; I have some idea he is; but, however, he is a very fine young man, Mrs. Hughes says, and likely to do very well.”

Catherine inquired no further; she had heard enough to feel that Mrs. Allen had no real intelligence to give, and that she was most particularly unfortunate herself in having missed such a meeting with both brother and sister. Could she have foreseen such a circumstance, nothing should have persuaded her to go out with the others; and, as it was, she could only lament her ill-luck, and think over what she had lost till it was clear to her that the drive had by no means been very pleasant, and that John Thorpe himself was quite disagreeable.

A Miserable Disappointment

[The] hopes of a delightful walk in the country, and then of a drive to Blaize Castle beyond Clifton, end in a sleepless night for poor Catherine.]

The morrow brought a very sober-looking morning ; the sun making only a few efforts to appear ; and Catherine augured from it everything most favourable to her wishes. A bright morning so early in the year, she allowed, would generally turn to rain ; but a cloudy one foretold improvement as the day advanced. She applied to Mr. Allen for confirmation of her hopes, but Mr. Allen not having his own skies and barometer about him, declined giving any absolute promise of sunshine. She applied to Mrs. Allen, and Mrs. Allen's opinion was more positive. "She had no doubt in the world of its being a very fine day, if the clouds would only go off, and the sun keep out."

At about eleven o'clock, however, a few specks of small rain upon the windows caught Catherine's watchful eye, and "Oh dear ! I do believe it will be wet," broke from her in a most desponding tone.

"I thought how it would be," said Mrs. Allen.

"No walk for me to-day," sighed Catherine ; "but perhaps it may come to nothing, or it may hold up before twelve."

"Perhaps it may ; but then, my dear, it will be so dirty."

"Oh ! that will not signify ; I never mind dirt."

"No," replied her friend very placidly, "I know you never mind dirt."

After a short pause, "It comes on faster and faster !" said Catherine, as she stood watching at a window.

“So it does, indeed. If it keeps raining, the streets will be very wet.”

“There are four umbrellas up already. How I hate the sight of an umbrella!”

“They are disagreeable things to carry. I would much rather take a chair at any time.”

“It was such a nice-looking morning! I felt so convinced it would be dry!”

“Anybody would have thought so, indeed. There will be very few people in the Pump-room, if it rains all the morning. I hope Mr. Allen will put on his great coat when he goes, but I dare say he will not, for he had rather do anything in the world than walk out in a great coat; I wonder he should dislike it, it must be so comfortable.”

The rain continued fast, though not heavy. Catherine went every five minutes to the clock, threatening, on each return, that, if it still kept on raining another five minutes, she would give up the matter as hopeless. The clock struck twelve, and it still rained. “You will not be able to go, my dear.”

“I do not quite despair yet. I shall not give it up till a quarter after twelve. This is just the time of day for it to clear up, and I do think it looks a little lighter. There, it is twenty minutes after twelve, and now I *shall* give it up entirely. Oh! that we had such weather here as they had at Udolpho, or at least in Tuscany and the South of France!—the night that poor St. Aubin died!—such beautiful weather!”

At half-past twelve, when Catherine’s anxious attention to the weather was over, and she could no longer claim any merit from its amendment, the sky began voluntarily to clear. A gleam of sunshine took her quite by surprise; she looked round, the clouds were parting, and she instantly returned to the

window to watch over and encourage the happy appearance. Ten minutes more made it certain that a bright afternoon would succeed, and justified the opinion of Mrs. Allen, who had "always thought it would clear up." But whether Catherine might still expect her friends, whether there had not been too much rain for Miss Tilney to venture, must yet be a question.

It was too dirty for Mrs. Allen to accompany her husband to the Pump-room; he accordingly set off by himself, and Catherine had barely watched him down the street, when her notice was claimed by the approach of the same two open carriages, containing the same three people who had surprised her so much a few mornings back.

"Isabella, my brother, and Mr. Thorpe, I declare! They are coming for me, perhaps; but I shall not go; I cannot go indeed; for, you know, Miss Tilney may still call." Mrs. Allen agreed to it. John Thorpe was soon with them, and his voice was with them yet sooner, for on the stairs he was calling out to Miss Morland to be quick. "Make haste! make haste!" as he threw open the door, "put on your hat this moment; there is no time to be lost; we are going to Bristol. How d'ye do, Mrs. Allen?"

"To Bristol! Is not that a great way off? But, however, I cannot go with you to-day, because I am engaged; I expect some friends every moment." This was of course vehemently talked down as no reason at all, Mrs. Allen was called on to second him, and the two others walked in to give their assistance. "My sweetest Catherine, is not this delightful? We shall have a most heavenly drive. You are to thank your brother and me for the scheme: it darted into our heads at breakfast time, I verily believe at the

same instant ; and we should have been off two hours ago if it had not been for this detestable rain. But it does not signify, the nights are moonlight, and we shall do delightfully. Oh ! I am in such ecstasies at the thoughts of a little country air and quiet ! so much better than going to the Lower Rooms. We shall drive directly to Clifton and dine there ; and as soon as dinner is over, if there is time for it, go on to Kingsweston."

" I doubt our being able to do so much," said Morland.

" You croaking fellow," cried Thorpe, " we shall be able to do ten times more. Kingsweston ! ay, and Blaize Castle too, and anything else we can hear of ; but here is your sister says she will not go."

" Blaize Castle ! " cried Catherine ; " what is that ? "

" The finest place in England ; worth going fifty miles at any time to see."

" What, is it really a castle, an old castle ? "

" The oldest in the kingdom."

" But is it like what one reads of ? "

" Exactly : the very same."

" But now, really, are there towers and long galleries ? "

" By dozens."

" Then I should like to see it ; but I cannot, I cannot go."

" Not go ! my beloved creature, what do you mean ? "

" I cannot go, because (looking down as she spoke, fearful of Isabella's smile) I expect Miss Tilney and her brother to call on me to take a country walk. They promised to come at twelve, only it rained ; but now, as it is so fine, I dare say they will be here soon."

" Not they, indeed," cried Thorpe, " for, as we

turned into Broad Street, I saw them. Does he not drive a phaeton with bright chestnuts ? ”

“ I do not know indeed.”

“ Yes, I know he does ; I saw him. You are talking of the man you danced with last night, are not you ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, I saw him at that moment turn up the Lansdown Road, driving a smart-looking girl.”

“ Did you, indeed ? ”

“ Did, upon my soul, knew him again directly ; and he seemed to have got some very pretty cattle too.”

“ It is very odd ! But I suppose they thought it would be too dirty for a walk.”

“ And well they might, for I never saw so much dirt in my life. Walk ! you could no more walk than you could fly ! It has not been so dirty the whole winter ; it is ankle deep everywhere.”

Isabella corroborated it :—“ My dearest Catherine, you cannot form an idea of the dirt ; come, you must go ; you cannot refuse going now.”

“ I should like to see the castle ; but may we go all over it ? May we go up every staircase, and into every suite of rooms ? ”

“ Yes, yes ; into every hole and corner.”

“ But then, if they should only be gone out for an hour till it is drier, and call by-and-by ? ”

“ Make yourself easy, there is no danger of that ; for I heard Tilney hallooing to a man who was just passing by on horseback, that they were going as far as Wick Rocks.”

“ Then I will. Shall I go, Mrs. Allen ? ”

“ Just as you please, my dear.”

“ Mrs. Allen, you must persuade her to go,” was the

general cry. Mrs. Allen was not inattentive to it. "Well, my dear," said she, "suppose you go." In two minutes they were off.

Catherine's feelings, as she got into the carriage, were in a very unsettled state: divided between regret for the loss of one great pleasure, and the hope of soon enjoying another, almost its equal in degree, however unlike in kind. She could not think the Tilneys had acted quite well by her, in so readily giving up their engagement, without sending her any message of excuse. It was now but an hour later than the time fixed on for the beginning of their walk; and, in spite of what she had heard of the prodigious accumulation of dirt in the course of that hour, she could not from her own observation help thinking that they might have gone with very little inconvenience. To feel herself slighted by them was very painful. On the other hand, the delight of exploring an edifice like Udolpho, as her fancy represented Blaize Castle to be, was such a counterpoise of good, as might console her for almost anything.

They passed briskly down Pulteney Street, and through Laura Place, without the exchange of many words. Thorpe talked to his horse, and she meditated by turns on broken promises and broken arches, phaetons and false hangings, Tilneys and trap-doors. As they entered Argyle Buildings, however, she was roused by this address from her companion, "Who is that girl who looked at you so hard as she went by?"

"Who? where?"

"On the right-hand pavement; she must be almost out of sight now." Catherine looked round, and saw Miss Tilney leaning on her brother's arm, walking slowly down the street. She saw them both

looking back at her. "Stop, stop, Mr. Thorpe," she impatiently cried, "it is Miss Tilney ; it is indeed. How could you tell me they were gone ? Stop, stop, I will get out this moment and go to them." But to what purpose she did speak ? Thorpe only lashed his horse into a brisker trot ; the Tilneys, who had soon ceased to look after her, were in a moment out of sight round the corner of Laura Place, and in another moment she was herself whisked into the Market Place. Still, however, and during the length of another street, she entreated him to stop. "Pray, pray stop, Mr. Thorpe. I cannot go on, I will not go on ; I must go back to Miss Tilney." But Mr. Thorpe only laughed, smacked his whip, encouraged his horse, made odd noises, and drove on : and Catherine, angry and vexed as she was, having no power of getting away, was obliged to give up the point and submit. Her reproaches, however, were not spared. "How could you deceive me so, Mr. Thorpe ? How could you say that you saw them driving up the Lansdown Road ? I would not have had it happen so for the world. They must think it so strange, so rude of me, to go by them, too, without saying a word ! You do not know how vexed I am. I shall have no pleasure at Clifton, nor in anything else. I had rather, ten thousand times rather, get out now, and walk back to them. How could you say you saw them driving out in a phaeton ?" Thorpe defended himself very stoutly, declared he had never seen two men so much alike in his life, and would hardly give up the point of its having been Tilney himself.

Their drive, even when the subject was over, was not likely to be very agreeable. Catherine's complaisance was no longer what it had been in their

former airing. She listened reluctantly, and her replies were short. Blaize Castle remained her only comfort; towards *that*, she still looked at intervals with pleasure; though rather than be disappointed of the promised walk, and especially rather than be thought ill of by the Tilneys, she would willingly have given up all the happiness which its walls could supply: the happiness of a progress through a long suite of lofty rooms, exhibiting the remains of magnificent furniture, though now for many years deserted: the happiness of being stopped in their way along narrow, winding vaults, by a low, grated door: or even of having their lamp, their only lamp, extinguished by a sudden gust of wind, and of being left in total darkness. In the meanwhile, they proceeded on their journey without any mischance: and were within view of the town of Keynsham, when a halloo from Morland, who was behind them, made his friend pull up, to know what was the matter. The others then came close enough for conversation; and Morland said, "We had better go back, Thorpe; it is too late to go on to-day; your sister thinks so as well as I. We have been exactly an hour coming from Pulteney Street, very little more than seven miles; and, I suppose, we have at least eight more to go. It will never do. We set out a great deal too late. We had much better put it off till another day, and turn round."

"It is all one to me," replied Thorpe, rather angrily; and instantly turning his horse, they were on their way back to Bath.

"If your brother had not got such a d——d beast to drive," said he soon afterwards, "we might have done it very well. My horse would have trotted to Clifton within the hour, if left to himself, and I have

almost broken my arm with pulling him into that cursed broken-winded jade's pace. Morland is a fool for not keeping a horse and gig of his own."

"No, he is not," said Catherine, warmly; "for I am sure he could not afford it."

"And why cannot he afford it?"

"Because he has not money enough."

"And whose fault is that?"

"Nobody's that I know of." Thorpe then said something in the loud, incoherent way to which he had often recourse, about its being a d——d thing to be miserly; and that if people who rolled in money could not afford things, he did not know who could, which Catherine did not even endeavour to understand. Disappointed of what was to have been the consolation of her first disappointment, she was less and less disposed either to be agreeable herself, or to find her companion so; and they returned to Pulteney Street without her speaking twenty words.

As she entered the house, the footman told her that a gentleman and lady had called and inquired for her a few minutes after her setting off: that, when he told them she was gone out with Mr. Thorpe, the lady had asked whether any message had been left for her, and on his saying no, had felt for a card, but said she had none about her, and went away. Pondering over these heart-rending tidings, Catherine walked slowly upstairs. At the head of them she was met by Mr. Allen, who, on hearing the reason of their speedy return, said, "I am glad your brother had so much sense; I am glad you are come back. It was a strange, wild scheme."

They all spent the evening together at Thorpe's. Catherine was disturbed and out of spirits; but

Isabella seemed to find a pool of commerce, in the fate of which she shared, by private partnership with Morland, a very good equivalent for the quiet and country air of an inn at Clifton. Her satisfaction, too, in not being at the Lower Rooms was spoken more than once. "How I pity the poor creatures that are going there! How glad I am that I am not amongst them! I wonder whether it will be a full ball or not! They have not begun dancing yet. I would not be there for all the world. It is so delightful to have an evening now and then to one's self. I dare say it will not be a very good ball. I know the Mit-chells will not be there. I am sure I pity everybody that is. But I dare say, Mr. Morland, you long to be at it, do you not? I am sure you do. Well, pray do not let anybody here be a restraint on you. I dare say we could do very well without you, but you men think yourselves of such consequence."

Catherine could almost have accused Isabella of being wanting in tenderness towards herself and her sorrows, so very little did they appear to dwell on her mind, and so very inadequate was the comfort she offered. "Do not be so dull, my dearest creature," she whispered. "You will quite break my heart. It was amazingly shocking, to be sure, but the Tilneys were entirely to blame. Why were not they more punctual? It was dirty, indeed, but what did that signify? I am sure John and I should not have minded it. I never mind going through anything where a friend is concerned; that is my disposition, and John is just the same; he has amazing strong feelings. Good heavens! what a delightful hand you have got! Kings, I vow! I never was so happy in my life! I would fifty times rather you should have them than myself."

And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch which is the true heroine's portion ; to a pillow strewed with thorns and wet with tears. And lucky may she think herself, if she get another good night's rest in the course of the next three months.

Isabella Thorpe is engaged to James Morland

[The news that her brother is to marry her new friend gives great satisfaction to Catherine.]

Early the next day a note from Isabella, speaking peace and tenderness in every line, and entreating the immediate presence of her friend on a matter of the utmost importance, hastened Catherine, in the happiest state of confidence and curiosity, to Edgar's Buildings. The two youngest Miss Thorpes were by themselves in the parlour, and on Anne's quitting it to call her sister, Catherine took the opportunity of asking the other for some particulars of their yesterday's party. Maria desired no greater pleasure than to speak of it ; and Catherine immediately learnt that it had been altogether the most delightful scheme in the world, that nobody could imagine how charming it had been, and that it had been more delightful than anybody could conceive. Such was the information of the first five minutes ; the second unfolded thus much in detail, that they had driven directly to the York Hotel, ate some soup, and bespoke an early dinner, walked down to the Pump-room, tasted the water, and laid out some shillings in purses and spars ; thence adjourned to eat ice at a pastry-cook's, and hurrying back to the hotel, swallowed their dinner in haste, to prevent being in the dark, and then had a delightful drive back, only the moon was not up,

and it rained a little, and Mr. Morland's horse was so tired he could hardly get it along.

Catherine listened with heartfelt satisfaction. It appeared that Blaize Castle had never been thought of, and as for all the rest, there was nothing to regret for half an instant. Maria's intelligence concluded with a tender effusion of pity for her sister Anne, whom she represented as insupportably cross from being excluded the party.

"She will never forgive me, I am sure ; but, you know, how could I help it ? John would have me go, for he vowed he would not drive her because she had such thick ankles. I dare say she will not be in good humour again this month ; but I am determined I will not be cross ; it is not a little matter that puts me out of temper."

Isabella now entered the room with so eager a step and a look of such happy importance, as engaged all her friend's notice ; Maria was without ceremony sent away, and Isabella, embracing Catherine, thus began :—"Yes, my dear Catherine, it is so, indeed ; your penetration has not deceived you. Oh, that arch eye of yours ! it sees through everything."

Catherine replied only by a look of wondering ignorance.

"Nay, my beloved, sweetest friend," continued the other, "compose yourself. I am amazingly agitated, as you perceive. Let us sit down and talk in comfort. Well, and so you guessed it the moment you had my note ? Sly creature ! Oh ! my dear Catherine, you alone who know my heart can judge of my present happiness. Your brother is the most charming of men. I only wish I were more worthy of him. But what will your excellent father and mother say ? Oh, Heavens ! when I think of them I am so agitated !"

Catherine's understanding began to awake; an idea of the truth suddenly darted into her mind; and, with the natural blush of so new an emotion, she cried out: "Good heaven! my dear Isabella, what do you mean? Can you—can you really be in love with James?"

This bold surmise, however, she soon learnt comprehended but half the fact. The anxious affection which she was accused of having continually watched in Isabella's every look and action, had, in the course of their yesterday's party, received the delightful confession of an equal love. Her heart and faith were alike engaged to James. Never had Catherine listened to anything so full of interest, wonder, and joy. Her brother and her friend engaged! New to such circumstances, the importance of it appeared unspeakably great, and she contemplated it as one of those grand events of which the ordinary course of life can hardly afford a return. The strength of her feelings she could not express; the nature of them, however, contented her friend. The happiness of having such a sister was their first effusion, and the fair ladies mingled in embraces and tears of joy.

Delighting, however, as Catherine sincerely did, in the prospect of the connection, it must be acknowledged that Isabella far surpassed her in tender anticipations. "You will be so infinitely dearer to me, my Catherine, than either Anne or Maria. I feel that I shall be much more attached to my dear Morland's family than to my own."

This was a pitch of friendship beyond Catherine.

"You are so like your dear brother," continued Isabella, "that I quite doted on you the moment I saw you. But so it always is with me; the first moment settles everything. The very first day that

Morland came to us last Christmas, the very first moment I beheld him, my heart was irrevocably gone. I remember I wore my yellow gown, with my hair done up in braids ; and when I came into the drawing-room, and John introduced him, I thought I never saw anybody so handsome before."

Here Catherine secretly acknowledged the power of love ; for, though exceedingly fond of her brother, and partial to all his endowments, she had never in her life thought him handsome.

" I remember, too, Miss Andrews drank tea with us that evening, and wore her puce-coloured sarsenet ; and she looked so heavenly, that I thought your brother must certainly fall in love with her ; I could not sleep a wink all night for thinking of it. Oh ! Catherine, the many sleepless nights I have had on your brother's account ; I would not have you suffer half what I have done ! I am grown wretchedly thin, I know ; but I will not pain you by describing my anxiety ; you have seen enough of it. I feel that I have betrayed myself perpetually ; so unguarded in speaking of my partiality for the church ! But my secret I was always sure would be safe with *you*."

Catherine felt that nothing could have been safer ; but ashamed of an ignorance little expected, she dared no longer contest the point, nor refuse to have been as full of arch penetration and affectionate sympathy as Isabella chose to consider her. Her brother, she found was preparing to set off with all speed to Fullerton to make known his situation and ask consent ; and here was a source of some real agitation to the mind of Isabella. Catherine endeavoured to persuade her, as she was herself persuaded, that her father and mother would never oppose their son's wishes. " It is impossible," said she, " for parents

to be more kind, or more desirous of their children's happiness ; I have no doubt of their consenting immediately."

" Morland says exactly the same," replied Isabella ; " and yet I dare not expect it ; my fortune will be so small ; they never can consent to it. Your brother, who might marry anybody."

Here Catherine again discerned the force of love.

" Indeed, Isabella, you are too humble. The difference of fortune can be nothing to signify."

" Oh ! my sweet Catherine, in *your* generous heart I know it would signify nothing, but we must not expect such disinterestedness in many. As for myself, I am sure I only wish our situations were reversed. Had I the command of millions, were I mistress of the whole world, your brother would be my only choice."

This charming sentiment, recommended as much by sense as novelty, gave Catherine a most pleasing remembrance of all the heroines of her acquaintance ; and she thought her friend never looked more lovely than in uttering the grand idea. " I am sure they will consent," was her frequent declaration ; " I am sure they will be delighted with you."

" For my own part," said Isabella, " my wishes are so moderate, that the smallest income in nature would be enough for me. Where people are really attached, poverty itself is wealth ; grandeur I detest ; I would not settle in London for the universe. A cottage in some retired village would be ecstasy. There are some charming little villas about Richmond."

" Richmond ! " cried Catherine. " You must settle near Fullerton. You must be near us."

" I am sure I shall be miserable if we do not. If I can but be near *you*, I shall be satisfied. But this

is idle talking ! I will not allow myself to think of such things till we have your father's answer. Norland says that by sending it to-night to Salisbury, we may have it to-morrow ! To-morrow ! I know I shall never have courage to open the letter. I know it will be the death of me."

A reverie succeeded this conviction, and when Isabella spoke again, it was to resolve on the quality of her wedding-gown.

Their confidence was put an end to by the anxious young lover himself, who came to breathe his parting sigh before he set off for Wiltshire. Catherine wished to congratulate him, but knew not what to say, and her eloquence was only in her eyes. From them, however, the eight parts of speech shone out most expressively, and James could combine them with ease. Impatient for the realisation of all that he hoped at home, his adieus were not long, and they would have been yet shorter had he not been frequently detained by the urgent entreaties of his fair one that he would go. Twice was he called almost from the door by her eagerness to have him gone. " Indeed, Morland, I must drive you away. Consider how far you have to ride. I cannot bear to see you linger so. For Heaven's sake, waste no more time. There, go, go—I insist on it."

The two friends, with hearts now more united than ever, were inseparable for the day ; and in schemes of sisterly happiness the hours flew along. Mrs. Thorpe and her son, who were acquainted with everything, and who seemed only to want Mr. Morland's consent to consider Isabella's engagement as the most fortunate circumstance imaginable for their family, were allowed to join their counsels, and add their quota of significant looks and mysterious expressions, to fill

up the measure of curiosity to be raised in the unprivileged younger sisters. To Catherine's simple feelings, this odd sort of reserve seemed neither kindly meant, nor consistently supported; and its unkindness she would hardly have forborne pointing out, had its inconsistency been less their friend; but Anne and Maria soon set her heart at ease by the sagacity of their "I know what"; and the evening was spent in a sort of war of wit, a display of family ingenuity; on one side in the mystery of an affected secret, on the other of undefined discovery, all equally acute.

Catherine was with her friend again the next day, endeavouring to support her spirits, and while away the many tedious hours before the delivery of the letters; a needful exertion; for as the time of reasonable expectation drew near, Isabella became more and more desponding, and before the letter arrived, had worked herself into a state of real distress. But when it did come, where could distress be found? "I have had no difficulty in gaining the consent of my kind parents, and am promised that everything in their power shall be done to forward my happiness," were the first three lines, and in one moment all was joyful security. The brightest glow was instantly spread over Isabella's features—all care and anxiety seemed removed, her spirits became almost too high for control, and she called herself without scruple the happiest of mortals.

Mrs. Thorpe, with tears of joy, embraced her daughter, her son, her visitor, and could have embraced half the inhabitants of Bath with satisfaction. Her heart was overflowing with tenderness. It was "dear John" and "dear Catherine," at every word; "dear Anne and dear Maria" must immediately be

made sharers in their felicity ; and two “ dears ” at once before the name of Isabella were not more than that beloved child had now well earned. John himself was no skulker in joy. He not only bestowed on Mr. Morland the high commendation of being one of the finest fellows in the world, but swore off many sentences in his praise.

The letter whence sprang all this felicity was short, containing little more than this assurance of success ; and every particular was deferred till James could write again. But for particulars Isabella could well afford to wait. The needful was comprised in Mr. Morland’s promise ; his honour was pledged to make everything easy ; and by what means their income was to be formed, whether landed property were to be resigned, or funded money made over, was a matter in which her disinterested spirit took no concern. She knew enough to feel secure of an honourable and speedy establishment, and her imagination took a rapid flight over its attendant felicities. She saw herself, at the end of a few weeks, the gaze and admiration of every new acquaintance at Fullerton, the envy of every valued old friend in Pulteney Street, with a carriage at her command, a new name on her tickets, and a brilliant exhibition of hoop rings on her fingers.

When the contents of the letter were ascertained, John Thorpe, who had only waited its arrival to begin his journey to London, prepared to set off. “ Well, Miss Morland,” said he, on finding her alone in the parlour, “ I am come to bid you good-bye.” Catherine wished him a good journey. Without appearing to hear her, he walked to the window, fidgeted about, hummed a tune, and seemed wholly self-occupied.

“ Shall not you be late at Devizes ? ” said Catherine.

He made no answer ; but after a minute's silence burst out with, " A famous good thing this marrying scheme, upon my soul ! A clever fancy of Morland's and Belle's. What do you think of it, Miss Morland ? I say it is no bad notion."

" I am sure I think it a very good one."

" Do you ?—that's honest, by heavens ! I am glad you are no enemy to matrimony, however. Did you ever hear the old song, ' Going to one wedding brings on another ? ' I say, you will come to Belle's wedding, I hope."

" Yes ; I have promised your sister to be with her, if possible."

" And then you know"—twisting himself about, and forcing a foolish laugh—" I say, then you know, we may try the truth of this same old song."

" May we ? but I never sing. Well, I wish you a good journey. I dine with Miss Tilney to-day, and must now be going home."

" Nay, but there is no such confounded hurry. Who knows when we may be together again ? Not but that I shall be down again by the end of a fortnight, and a devilish long fortnight it will appear to me."

" Then why do you stay away so long ? " replied Catherine, finding that he waited for an answer.

" That is kind of you, however ; kind and good-natured. I shall not forget it in a hurry. But you have more good-nature, and all that, than anybody living, I believe. A monstrous deal of good-nature, and it is not only good-nature, but you have so much—so much of everything ; and then you have such—upon my soul, I do not know anybody like you."

" Oh dear ! there are a great many people like me, I dare say, only a great deal better. Good morning to you."

"But I say, Miss Morland, I shall come and pay my respects at Fullerton before it is long, if not disagreeable."

"Pray do; my father and mother will be very glad to see you."

"And I hope—I hope, Miss Morland, *you* will not be sorry to see me."

"Oh dear! not at all. There are very few people I am sorry to see. Company is always cheerful."

"That is just my way of thinking. Give me but a little cheerful company, let me only have the company of the people I love, let me only be where I like and with whom I like, and the devil take the rest, say I; and I am heartily glad to hear you say the same. But I have a notion, Miss Morland, you and I think pretty much alike upon most matters."

"Perhaps we may; but it is more than I ever thought of. And as to *most matters*, to say the truth, there are not many that I know my own mind about."

"By Jove, no more do I! It is not my way to bother my brains with what does not concern me. My notion of things is simple enough. Let me only have the girl I like, say I, with a comfortable house over my head, and what care I for all the rest? Fortune is nothing. I am sure of a good income of my own; and if she had not a penny, why so much the better."

"Very true. I think like you there. If there is a good fortune on one side, there can be no occasion for any on the other. No matter which has it, so that there is enough. I hate the idea of one great fortune looking out for another; and to marry for money I think the wickedest thing in existence. Good day. We shall be very glad to see you at Fullerton, whenever it is convenient." And away

she went. It was not in the power of all his gallantry to detain her longer. With such news to communicate, and such a visit to prepare for, her departure was not to be delayed by anything in his nature to urge; and she hurried away, leaving him to the undivided consciousness of his own happy address, and her explicit encouragement.

The agitation which she had herself experienced on first learning her brother's engagement made her expect to raise no inconsiderable emotion in Mr. and Mrs. Allen, by the communication of the wonderful event. How great was her disappointment! The important affair, which many words of preparation ushered in, had been foreseen by them both ever since her brother's arrival; and all that they felt on the occasion was comprehended in a wish for the young people's happiness, with a remark, on the gentleman's side, in favour of Isabella's beauty, and on the lady's, of her great good luck. It was to Catherine the most surprising insensibility. The disclosure, however, of the great secret of James's going to Fullerton the day before did raise some emotion in Mrs. Allen. She could not listen to that with perfect calmness, but repeatedly regretted the necessity of its concealment, wished she could have known his intention, wished she could have seen him before he went, as she should certainly have troubled him with her best regards to his father and mother, and her kind compliments to all the Skinners.

An Invitation to the Abbey

[While still with the Allens at Bath, Catherine is asked to stay with the Tilneys at Northanger Abbey.]

The Allens had now entered on the sixth week of their stay in Bath ; and whether it should be the last was for some time a question, to which Catherine listened with a beating heart. To have her acquaintance with the Tilneys end so soon was an evil which nothing could counterbalance. Her whole happiness seemed at stake, while the affair was in suspense, and everything secured when it was determined that the lodgings should be taken for another fortnight. What this additional fortnight was to produce to her beyond the pleasure of sometimes seeing Henry Tilney made but a small part of Catherine's speculation. Once or twice, indeed, since James's engagement had taught her what *could* be done, she had got so far as to indulge in a secret "perhaps," but in general the felicity of being with him for the present bounded her views ; the present was now comprised in another three weeks, and her happiness being certain for that period, the rest of her life was at such a distance as to excite but little interest. In the course of the morning which saw this business arranged, she visited Miss Tilney, and poured forth her joyful feelings. It was doomed to be a day of trial. No sooner had she expressed her delight in Mr. Allen's lengthened stay, than Miss Tilney told her of her father's having just determined upon quitting Bath by the end of another week. Here was a blow ! The past suspense of the morning had been ease and quiet to the present disappointment. Catherine's

countenance fell ; and in a voice of most sincere concern, she echoed Miss Tilney's concluding words, " By the end of another week ! "

" Yes ; my father can seldom be prevailed on to give the waters what I think a fair trial. He has been disappointed of some friends' arrival whom he expected to meet here, and as he is now pretty well, is in a hurry to get home. "

" I am very sorry for it, " said Catherine, dejectedly, " if I had known this before — "

" Perhaps, " said Miss Tilney, in an embarrassed manner, " you would be so good—it would make me very happy if — "

The entrance of her father put a stop to the civility which Catherine was beginning to hope might introduce a desire of their corresponding. After addressing her with his usual politeness, he turned to his daughter and said, " Well, Eleanor, may I congratulate you on being successful in your application to your fair friend ? "

" I was just beginning to make the request, sir, as you came in. "

" Well, proceed by all means. I know how much your heart is in it. My daughter, Miss Morland, " he continued without leaving his daughter time to speak, " has been forming a very bold wish. We leave Bath, as she has, perhaps, told you, on Saturday sen'night. A letter from my steward tells me that my presence is wanted at home ; and being disappointed in my hope of seeing the Marquis of Longtown and General Courteney here, some of my very old friends, there is nothing to detain me longer in Bath. And could we carry our selfish point with you, we should leave it without a single regret. Can you, in short, be prevailed on to quit this scene of public triumph, and oblige

your friend Eleanor with your company in Gloucestershire? I am almost ashamed to make the request, though its presumption would certainly appear greater to every creature in Bath than yourself. Modesty such as yours—but not for the world would I pain it by open praise. If you can be induced to honour us with a visit, you will make us happy beyond expression. 'Tis true, we can offer nothing like the gaieties of this lively place; we can tempt you neither by amusement nor splendour, for our mode of living, as you see, is plain and unpretending, yet no endeavours shall be wanting on our side to make Northanger Abbey not wholly diaspreeable."

Northanger Abbey! These were thrilling words, and wound up Catherine's feelings to the highest point of ecstasy. Her grateful and gratified heart could hardly restrain its expressions within the language of tolerable calmness. To receive so flattering an invitation! To have her company so warmly solicited! Everything honourable and soothing, every present enjoyment and every future hope was contained in it, and her acceptance, with only the saving clause of papa and mamma's approbation, was eagerly given. "I will write home directly," said she, "and if they do not object, as I dare say they will not——"

General Tilney was not less sanguine, having already waited on her excellent friends in Pulteney Street, and obtained their sanction of his wishes. "Since they can consent to part with you," said he, "we may expect philosophy from all the world."

Miss Tilney was earnest, though gentle, in her secondary civilities, and the affair became in a few minutes as nearly settled as this necessary reference to Fullerton would allow.

Catherine is sent Home

[To her own astonishment, and the sorrow of the young Tilneys, Catherine is discourteously sent home alone by the General, whose partiality for her as a likely bride for his son has been first aroused and then destroyed by the mischief-making of John Thorpe.]

Catherine was too wretched to be fearful. The journey in itself had no terrors for her ; and she began it without either dreading its length, or feeling its solitariness. Leaning back in one corner of the carriage, in a violent burst of tears, she was conveyed some miles beyond the walls of the abbey before she raised her head ; and the highest point of ground within the park was almost closed from her view before she was capable of turning her eyes towards it. Unfortunately, the road she now travelled was the same which only ten days ago she had so happily passed along in going to and from Woodston : and, for fourteen miles, every bitter feeling was rendered more severe by the review of objects on which she had first looked under impressions so different. Every mile, as it brought her nearer Woodston, added to her sufferings ; and when within the distance of five she passed the turning which led to it, and thought of Henry, so near, yet so unconscious, her grief and agitation were excessive.

The day which she had spent at that place had been one of the happiest of her life. It was there, it was on that day that the General had made use of such expressions with regard to Henry and herself, had so spoken and so looked as to give her the most positive conviction of his actually wishing their

marriage. Yes, only ten days ago had he elated her by his pointed regard—had even confused her by his too significant reference! And now, what had she done, or what had she omitted to do, to merit such a change?

The only offence against him, of which she could accuse herself, had been such as was scarcely possible to reach his knowledge. Henry and her own heart only were privy to the shocking suspicions which she had so idly entertained; and equally safe did she believe her secret with each. Designedly, at least, Henry could not have betrayed her. If, indeed, by any strange mischance his father should have gained intelligence of what she had dared to think and look for, of her causeless fancies and injurious examinations, she could not wonder at any degree of his indignation. If aware of her having viewed him as a murderer, she could not wonder at his even turning her from his house. But a justification so full of torture to herself she trusted would not be in his power.

Anxious as were all her conjectures on this point, it was not, however, the one on which she dwelt most. There was a thought next nearer: a more prevailing, more impetuous concern; how Henry would think, and feel, and look, when he returned on the morrow to Northanger, and heard of her being gone, was a question of force and interest to rise over every other, to be never-ceasing, alternately irritating and soothing: it sometimes suggested the dread of his calm acquiescence, and at others was answered by the sweetest confidence in his regret and resentment. To the General, of course, he would not dare to speak; but to Eleanor, what might he not say to Eleanor about her?

In this unceasing recurrence of doubts and inquiries,

on any one article of which her mind was incapable of more than momentary repose, the hours passed away and her journey advanced much faster than she looked for. The pressing anxieties of thought which prevented her from noticing anything before her, when once beyond the neighbourhood of Woodston, saved her at the same time from watching her progress, and though no object on the road could engage a moment's attention, she found no stage of it tedious. From this she was preserved, too, by another cause ; by feeling no eagerness for her journey's conclusion ; for to return in such a manner to Fullerton was almost to destroy the pleasure of a meeting with those she loved best, even after an absence such as hers : an eleven weeks' absence. What had she to say that would not humble herself and pain her family ; that would not increase her own grief by the confession of it ; extend a useless resentment, and perhaps involve the innocent with the guilty in undistinguishing ill-will ? She could never do justice to Henry and Eleanor's merit ; she felt it too strongly for expression, and should a dislike be taken against them, should they be thought of unfavourably on their father's account, it would cut her to the heart.

With these feelings, she rather dreaded than sought for the first view of that well-known spire which would announce her within twenty miles of home. Salisbury she had known to be her point on leaving Northanger, but after the first stage, she had been indebted to the post-masters for the names of the places which were then to conduct her to it ; so great had been her ignorance of her route. She met with nothing, however, to distress or frighten her. Her youth, civil manners, and liberal pay, procured her all the attention that a traveller like herself could require ;

and stopping only to change horses, she travelled on for about eleven hours without accident or alarm, and between six and seven o'clock in the evening found herself entering Fullerton.

A heroine returning at the close of her career, to her native village, in all the triumph of recovered reputation, and all the dignity of a countess, with a long train of noble relations in their several phaetons, and three waiting-maids in a travelling chaise-and-four behind her, is an event on which the pen of the contriver may well delight to dwell ; it gives credit to every conclusion, and the author must share in the glory she so liberally bestows. But my affair is widely different : I bring back my heroine to her home in solitude and disgrace, and no sweet elation of spirits can lead me into minuteness. A heroine in a hack post-chaise is such a blow upon sentiment as no attempt at grandeur or pathos can withstand. Swiftly, therefore, shall her postboy drive through the village, amid the gaze of Sunday groups, and speedy shall be her descent from it.

But whatever might be the distress of Catherine's mind as she thus advanced towards the parsonage, and whatever the humiliation of her biographer in relating it, she was preparing enjoyment of no everyday nature for those to whom she went ; first, in the appearance of her carriage, and secondly, in herself. The chaise of a traveller being a rare sight in Fullerton, the whole family were immediately at the window ; and to have it stop at the sweep-gate was a pleasure to brighten every eye, and occupy every fancy ; a pleasure quite unlooked for by all but the two youngest children, a boy and girl of six and four years old, who expected a brother or sister in every carriage. Happy the glance that first distinguished Catherine ! Happy

the voice that proclaimed the discovery ! But whether such happiness were the lawful property of George or Harriet, could never be exactly understood.

Her father, mother, Sarah, George, and Harriet, all assembled at the door, to welcome her with affectionate eagerness, was a sight to awaken the best feelings of Catherine's heart ; and in the embrace of each, as she stepped from the carriage, she found herself soothed beyond anything that she had believed possible. So surrounded, so caressed, she was even happy ! In the joyfulness of family love, everything, for a short time, was subdued ; and the pleasure of seeing her, leaving them at first little leisure for calm curiosity, they were all seated round the tea-table, which Mrs. Morland had hurried for the comfort of the poor traveller, whose pale and jaded looks soon caught her notice, before any inquiry so direct as to demand a positive answer was addressed to her.

Reluctantly, and with much hesitation, did she then begin what might, perhaps, at the end of half-an-hour, be termed by the courtesy of her hearers an explanation ; but scarcely, within that time, could they at all discover the cause, or collect the particulars of her sudden return. They were far from being an irritable race ; far from any quickness in catching, or bitterness in resenting affronts ; but here, when the whole was unfolded, was an insult not to be overlooked, nor, for the first half-hour, to be easily pardoned. Without suffering any romantic alarm in the consideration of their daughter's long and lonely journey, Mr. and Mrs. Morland could not but feel that it might have been productive of much unpleasantness to her ; that it was what they could never have voluntarily suffered ; and that, in forcing her on such a measure, General Tilney had acted neither honourably nor feelingly,

neither as a gentleman nor as a parent. Why he had done it, what could have provoked him to such a breach of hospitality, and so suddenly turned all his partial regard for their daughter into actual ill-will, was a matter which they were at least as far from divining as Catherine herself ; but it did not oppress them by any means so long ; and, after a due course of useless conjecture, that “ it was a strange business, and that he must be a very strange man,” grew enough for all their indignation and wonder ; though Sarah, indeed, still indulged in the sweets of incomprehensibility, exclaiming and conjecturing with youthful ardour—“ My dear, you give yourself a great deal of needless trouble,” said her mother at last ; “ depend upon it, it is something not at all worth understanding.”

“ I can allow for his wishing Catherine away when he recollected this engagement,” said Sarah ; “ but why not do it civilly ? ”

“ I am sorry for the young people,” returned Mrs. Morland ; “ they must have a sad time of it ; but as for anything else, it is no matter now : Catherine is safe at home, and our comfort does not depend upon General Tilney.” Catherine sighed. “ Well,” continued her philosophic mother, “ I am glad I did not know of your journey at the time ; but now it is all over, perhaps there is no great harm done. It is always good for young people to be put upon exerting themselves ; and you know, my dear Catherine, you always were a sad little shatter-brained creature ; but now you must have been forced to have your wits about you, with so much changing of chaises and so forth ; and I hope it will appear that you have not left anything behind you in any of the pockets.”

Catherine hoped so too, and tried to feel an interest

in her own amendment, but her spirits were quite worn down ; and to be silent and alone becoming soon her only wish, she readily agreed to her mother's next counsel of going early to bed. Her parents seeing nothing in her ill-looks and agitation but the natural consequence of mortified feelings, and of the unusual exertion and fatigue of such a journey, parted from her without any doubt of their being soon slept away ; and though, when they all met the next morning, her recovery was not equal to their hopes, they were still perfectly unsuspecting of there being any deeper evil. They never once thought of her heart, which, for the parents of a young lady of seventeen, just returned from her first excursion from home, was odd enough !

As soon as breakfast was over, she sat down to fulfil her promise to Miss Tilney, whose trust in the effect of time and distance on her friend's disposition was already justified, for already did Catherine reproach herself with having parted from Eleanor coldly ; with having never enough valued her merits or kindness ; and never enough commiserated her for what she had been yesterday left to endure. The strength of these feelings, however, was far from assisting her pen ; and never had it been harder for her to write than in addressing Eleanor Tilney. To compose a letter which might at once do justice to her sentiments and her situation, convey gratitude without servile regret, be guarded without coldness, and honest without resentment ; a letter which Eleanor might not be pained by the perusal of ; and, above all, which she might not blush herself, if Henry should chance to see, was an undertaking to frighten away all her powers of performance : and, after long thought and much perplexity, to be very brief was all that she could determine on with any confidence of

safety. The money, therefore, which Eleanor had advanced, was enclosed with little more than grateful thanks, and the thousand good wishes of a most affectionate heart.

“ This has been a strange acquaintance,” observed Mrs. Morland, as the letter was finished ; “ soon made and soon ended. I am sorry it happens so, for Mrs. Allen thought them very pretty kind of young people ; and you were sadly out of luck too, in your Isabella. Ah, poor James ! Well, we must live and learn ; and the next new friends you make I hope will be better worth keeping.”

Catherine coloured as she warmly answered, “ No friend can be better worth keeping than Eleanor.”

“ If so, my dear, I dare say you will meet again some time or other ; do not be uneasy. It is ten to one but you are thrown together again in the course of a few years ; and then, what a pleasure it will be ! ”

Mrs. Morland was not happy in her attempt at consolation. The hope of meeting again in the course of a few years could only put into Catherine’s head what might happen within that time to make a meeting dreadful to her. She could never forget Henry Tilney or think of him with less tenderness than she did at that moment, but he might forget her, and in that case to meet——! Her eyes filled with tears as she pictured her acquaintance so renewed ; and her mother perceiving her comfortable suggestions to have had no good effect, proposed, as another expedient for restoring her spirits, that they should call on Mrs. Allen.

The two houses were only a quarter of a mile apart ; and, as they walked, Mrs. Morland quickly despatched all that she felt on the score of James’s disappointment.

"We are sorry for him," said she, "but otherwise there is no harm done in the match going off; for it could not be a desirable thing to have him engaged to a girl whom we have not the smallest acquaintance with, and who was so entirely without fortune; but now after such behaviour, we cannot think at all well of her. Just at present it comes hard to poor James, but that will not last for ever; and I dare say he will be a discreeter man all his life, for the foolishness of his first choice."

This was just such a summary view of the affair as Catherine could listen to: another sentence might have endangered her complaisance, and made her reply less rational; for soon were all her thinking powers swallowed up in the reflection of her own change of feelings and spirits since last she had trodden that well-known road. It was not three months ago since, wild with joyful expectation, she had there run backwards and forwards some ten times a day, with a heart light, gay, and independent; looking forward to pleasures untasted and unalloyed, and as free from the apprehension of evil as from the knowledge of it. Three months ago had seen her all this, and now, how altered a being did she return!

She was received by the Allens with all the kindness which her unlooked-for appearance, acting on a steady affection, would naturally call forth; and great was their surprise, and warm their displeasure, on hearing how she had been treated, though Mrs. Morland's account of it was no inflated representation, no studied appeal to their passions. "Catherine took us quite by surprise yesterday evening," said she. "She travelled all the way post by herself, and knew nothing of coming till Saturday night; for General Tilney, from some odd fancy or other, all of a sudden grew

tired of having her there, and almost turned her out of the house. Very unfriendly, certainly ; and he must be a very odd man ; but we are so glad to have her amongst us again ! And it is a great comfort to find that she is not a poor helpless creature, but can shift very well for herself."

Mr. Allen expressed himself on the occasion with the reasonable resentment of a sensible friend ; and Mrs. Allen thought his expression quite good enough to be immediately made use of again by herself. His wonder, his conjectures, and his explanations, became in succession hers, with the addition of this single remark : " I really have not patience with the General," to fill up every accidental pause ; and " I really have not patience with the General," was uttered twice after Mr. Allen left the room, without any relaxation of anger, or any material digression of thought. A more considerable degree of wandering attended the third repetition ; and, after completing the fourth, she immediately added, " Only think, my dear, of my having got that frightful great rent in my best Mechlin so charmingly mended, before I left Bath, that one can hardly see where it was. I must show it you some day or other. Bath is a nice place, Catherine, after all. I assure you I did not above half like coming away. Mrs. Thorpe's being there was such a comfort to us, was it not ? You know, you and I were quite forlorn at first."

" Yes, but *that* did not last long," said Catherine, her eyes brightening at the recollection of what had first given spirit to her existence.

" Very true ; we soon met with Mrs. Thorpe, and then we wanted for nothing. My dear, do not you think these silk gloves wear very well ? I put them on new the first time of our going to the Lower Rooms,

you know, and I have worn them a great deal since. Do you remember that evening ? ”

“ Do I ? Oh ! perfectly.”

“ It was very agreeable, was not it ? Mr. Tilney drank tea with us, and I always thought him a great addition ; he is so very agreeable. I have a notion you danced with him, but am not quite sure. I remember I had my favourite gown on.”

Catherine could not answer ; and, after a short trial of other subjects, Mrs. Allen again returned to—
“ I really have not patience with the General ! Such an agreeable worthy man as he seemed to be ! I do not suppose, Mrs. Morland, you ever saw a better bred man in your life. His lodgings were taken the very day after he left them, Catherine. But no wonder ; Milsom Street, you know.”

As they walked home again, Mrs. Morland endeavoured to impress on her daughter's mind the happiness of having such steady well-wishers as Mr. and Mrs. Allen, and the very little consideration which the neglect or unkindness of slight acquaintances like the Tilneys ought to have with her, while she could preserve the good opinion and affection of her earliest friends. There was a great deal of good sense in all this ; but there are some situations of the human mind in which good sense has very little power ; and Catherine's feelings contradicted almost every position her mother advanced. It was upon the behaviour of these very slight acquaintances that all her present happiness depended ; and while Mrs. Morland was successfully confirming her own opinions by the justness of her own representations, Catherine was silently reflecting that *now* Henry must have arrived at Northanger ; *now* he must have heard of her departure ; and *now*, perhaps, they were all setting off for Hereford.

Pride and Prejudice

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet at Home

[Mr. Bennet, who has a keenly ironical humour, indulges it at the expense of his wife, who has no sense of humour whatever.]

IT is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

“But it is,” returned she; “for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.”

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do you not want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife impatiently.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

This was invitation enough.

“Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came

down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh, single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? how can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome? You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design? nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better; for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

“But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account; for in general, you know, they visit no new-comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him if you do not.”

“You are over-scrupulous surely. I daresay Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.”

“I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference.”

“They have none of them much to recommend them,” replied he, “they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.”

“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.”

“You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.”

“Ah, you do not know what I suffer.”

“But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood.”

“It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.”

“ Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all.”

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married ; its solace was visiting and news.

The Reverend William Collins

[The heir to Mr. Bennet's entailed estate, a conceited and sycophantic young clergyman to whom Lady Catherine de Bourgh has lately given a living, comes, self-invited, to visit at Longbourn.]

During dinner Mr. Bennet scarcely spoke at all : but when the servants were withdrawn, he thought it time to have some conversation with his guest, and therefore started a subject in which he expected him to shine, by observing that he seemed very fortunate in his patroness. Lady Catherine de Bourgh's attention to his wishes and consideration for his comfort appeared very remarkable. Mr. Bennet could not have chosen better. Mr. Collins was eloquent in her praise. The subject elevated him to more than usual solemnity of manner, and with a most important aspect he protested that “ he had never in his life witnessed such behaviour in a person of rank—such affability and condescension—as he

had himself experienced from Lady Catherine. She had been graciously pleased to approve of both the discourses which he had already had the honour of preaching before her. She had also asked him twice to dine at Rosings, and had sent for him only the Saturday before, to make up her pool of quadrille in the evening. Lady Catherine was reckoned proud by many people, he knew, but *he* had never seen anything but affability in her. She had always spoken to him as she would to any other gentleman ; she made not the smallest objection to his joining in the society of the neighbourhood, nor to his leaving his parish occasionally for a week or two to visit his relations. She had even condescended to advise him to marry as soon as he could, provided he chose with discretion ; and had once paid him a visit in his humble parsonage, where she had perfectly approved all the alterations he had been making, and had even vouchsafed to suggest some herself—some shelves in the closets upstairs.”

“ That is all very proper and civil, I am sure,” said Mrs. Bennet, “ and I daresay she is a very agreeable woman. It is a pity that great ladies in general are not more like her. Does she live near you, sir ? ”

“ The garden in which stands my humble abode is separated only by a lane from Rosings Park, her ladyship’s residence.”

“ I think you said she was a widow, sir ? Has she any family ? ”

“ She has one only daughter, the heiress of Rosings, and of very extensive property.”

“ Ah,” cried Mrs. Bennet, shaking her head, “ then she is better off than many girls. And what sort of young lady is she ? Is she handsome ? ”

“ She is a most charming young lady, indeed. Lady

Catherine herself says that, in point of true beauty, Miss De Bourgh is far superior to the handsomest of her sex ; because there is that in her features which marks the young woman of distinguished birth. She is, unfortunately, of a sickly constitution, which has prevented her making that progress in many accomplishments which she could not otherwise have failed of, as I am informed by the lady who superintended her education, and who still resides with them. But she is perfectly amiable, and often condescends to drive by my humble abode in her little phaeton and ponies."

"Has she been presented ? I do not remember her name among the ladies at court."

"Her indifferent state of health, unhappily, prevents her being in town and by that means, as I told Lady Catherine myself one day, has deprived the British Court of its brightest ornament. Her ladyship seemed pleased with the idea ; and you may imagine that I am happy on every occasion to offer those little delicate compliments which are always acceptable to ladies. I have more than once observed to Lady Catherine that her charming daughter seemed born to be a duchess, and that the most elevated rank, instead of giving her consequence, would be adorned by her. These are the kind of little things which please her ladyship, and it is a sort of attention which I conceive myself peculiarly bound to pay."

"You judge very properly," said Mr. Bennet, "and it is happy for you that you possess the talent of flattering with delicacy. May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study ?"

"They arise chiefly from what is passing at the time ; and though I sometimes amuse myself with

suggesting and arranging such little elegant compliments as may be adapted to ordinary occasions, I always wish to give them as unstudied an air as possible."

Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped ; and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment, maintaining at the same time the most resolute composure of countenance, and, except in an occasional glance at Elizabeth, requiring no partner in his pleasure.

By tea-time, however, the dose had been enough, and Mr. Bennet was glad to take his guest into the drawing-room again, and when tea was over, glad to invite him to read aloud to the ladies. Mr. Collins readily assented, and a book was produced ; but on beholding it (for everything announced it to be from a circulating library) he started back, and begging pardon, protested that he never read novels. Kitty stared at him, and Lydia exclaimed. Other books were produced, and after some deliberation he chose Fordyce's Sermons. Lydia gaped as he opened the volume, and before he had, with very monotonous solemnity, read three pages, she interrupted him with,

"Do you know, mamma, that my uncle Philips talks of turning away Richard? and if he does, Colonel Forster will hire him. My aunt told me so herself on Saturday. I shall walk to Meryton to-morrow to hear more about it, and to ask when Mr. Denny comes back from town."

Lydia was bid by her two eldest sisters to hold her tongue ; but Mr. Collins, much offended, laid aside his book, and said,—

"I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of a serious stamp, though written solely for their benefit. It amazes me, I confess ;

for certainly there can be nothing so advantageous to them as instruction. But I will no longer importune my young cousin."

Then turning to Mr. Bennet, he offered himself as his antagonist at backgammon. Mr. Bennet accepted the challenge, observing that he acted very wisely in leaving the girls to their own trifling amusements. Mrs. Bennet and her daughters apologised most civilly for Lydia's interruption, and promised that it should not occur again, if he would resume his book ; but Mr. Collins, after assuring them that he bore his young cousin no ill-will, and should never resent her behaviour as any affront, seated himself at another table with Mr. Bennet, and prepared for backgammon.

The Proposal of Marriage

[Mr. Collins, who thinks that as rector of a parish, he ought to marry, decides to unite the family interests by taking a wife from Longbourn. Mrs. Bennet having intimated that the eldest daughter, Jane, is likely to marry some one else, he turns his attention to the second girl, Elizabeth.]

The next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words,—

“ May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning ? ”

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered,—

“ Oh dear ! Yes, certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy ; I am sure she can have no objection. —Come, Kitty ; I want you upstairs.” And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,—

“ Dear ma’am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.”

“ No, no ; nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are.” And upon Elizabeth’s seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, “ Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.”

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction ; and a moment’s consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone, Mr. Collins began,—

“ Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness ; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother’s permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse,

however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble ; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying, and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued,—

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish ; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness ; and thirdly, which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too !) on this subject ; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss De Bourgh's footstool—that she said, ' Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake and for your *own* ; let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my

fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible when the melancholy event takes place which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent, and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without

further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins, very gravely; "but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand do all in my power to prevent

your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,—

"When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth, with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses are merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these:—It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into further consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may

ever be made to you. Your portion is, unhappily, so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must, therefore, conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined that, if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Mr. Collins's Patroness

[During a visit to her friend Charlotte (Lucas), who has married the rejected Mr. Collins in order to obtain "an establishment," Elizabeth is asked with her host and hostess and Charlotte's sister Maria to dine with Lady Catherine de Bourgh.]

Mr. Collins's triumph, in consequence of this invitation, was complete. The power of displaying the grandeur of his patroness to his wondering visitors, and of letting them see her civility towards himself and his wife, was exactly what he had wished for ; and that an opportunity of doing it should be given so soon was such an instance of Lady Catherine's condescension as he knew not how to admire enough.

"I confess," said he, "that I should not have been at all surprised by her ladyship's asking us on Sunday to drink tea and spend the evening at Rosings. I rather expected, from my knowledge of her affability, that it would happen. But who could have foreseen such an attention as this ? Who could have imagined that we should receive an invitation to dine there (an invitation, moreover, including the whole party) so immediately after your arrival ?"—"I am the less surprised at what has happened," replied Sir William, "from that knowledge of what the manners of the great really are which my situation in life has allowed me to acquire. About the court such instances of elegant breeding are not uncommon."

Scarcely anything was talked of the whole day or next morning but their visit to Rosings. Mr. Collins was carefully instructing them in what they were to expect, that the sight of such rooms, so many servants,

and so splendid a dinner might not wholly overpower them.

When the ladies were separating for the toilette, he said to Elizabeth,—

“Do not make yourself uneasy, my dear cousin, about your apparel. Lady Catherine is far from requiring that elegance of dress in us which becomes herself and daughter. I would advise you merely to put on whatever of your clothes is superior to the rest; there is no occasion for anything more. Lady Catherine will not think the worse of you for being simply dressed. She likes to have the distinction of rank preserved.”

While they were dressing, he came two or three times to their different doors, to recommend their being quick, as Lady Catherine very much objected to be kept waiting for her dinner. Such formidable accounts of her ladyship and her manner of living quite frightened Maria Lucas, who had been little used to company; and she looked forward to her introduction at Rosings with as much apprehension as her father had done to his presentation at St. James's.

As the weather was fine, they had a pleasant walk of about half a mile across the park. Every park has its beauty and its prospects; and Elizabeth saw much to be pleased with, though she could not be in such raptures as Mr. Collins expected the scene to inspire, and was but slightly affected by his enumeration of the windows in front of the house, and his relation of what the glazing altogether had originally cost Sir Lewis de Bourgh.

When they ascended the steps to the hall, Maria's alarm was every moment increasing, and even Sir William did not look perfectly calm. Elizabeth's courage did not fail her. She had heard nothing of

Lady Catherine that spoke her awful from any extraordinary talents or miraculous virtue, and the mere stateliness of money and rank she thought she could witness without trepidation.

From the entrance hall, of which Mr. Collins pointed out, with a rapturous air, the fine proportion and finished ornaments, they followed the servants through an ante-chamber to the room where Lady Catherine, her daughter, and Mrs. Jenkinson were sitting. Her ladyship, with great condescension, arose to receive them; and as Mrs. Collins had settled it with her husband that the office of introduction should be hers, it was performed in a proper manner, without any of those apologies and thanks which he would have thought necessary.

In spite of having been at St. James's, Sir William was so completely awed by the grandeur surrounding him, that he had but just courage enough to make a very low bow, and take his seat without saying a word; and his daughter, frightened almost out of her senses, sat on the edge of her chair, not knowing which way to look. Elizabeth found herself quite equal to the scene, and could observe the three ladies before her composedly. Lady Catherine was a tall, large woman, with strongly marked features, which might once have been handsome. Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank. She was not rendered formidable by silence, but whatever she said was spoken in so authoritative a tone as marked her self-importance, and brought Mr. Wickham immediately to Elizabeth's mind; and from the observation of the day altogether, she believed Lady Catherine to be exactly what he had represented.

When, after examining the mother, in whose countenance and deportment she soon found some resemblance of Mr. Darcy, she turned her eyes on the daughter, she could almost have joined in Maria's astonishment at her being so thin and so small. There was neither in figure nor face any likeness between the ladies. Miss De Bourgh was pale and sickly; her features, though not plain, were insignificant; and she spoke very little, except in a low voice to Mrs. Jenkinson, in whose appearance there was nothing remarkable, and who was entirely engaged in listening to what she said, and placing a screen in the proper direction before her eyes.

After sitting a few minutes, they were all sent to one of the windows to admire the view—Mr. Collins attending them to point out its beauties, and Lady Catherine kindly informing them that it was much better worth looking at in the summer.

The dinner was exceedingly handsome, and there were all the servants and all the articles of plate which Mr. Collins had promised; and, as he had likewise foretold, he took his seat at the bottom of the table, by her ladyship's desire, and looked as if he felt that life could furnish nothing greater. He carved and ate and praised with delighted alacrity; and every dish was commended first by him, and then by Sir William, who was now enough recovered to echo whatever his son-in-law said, in a manner which Elizabeth wondered Lady Catherine could bear. But Lady Catherine seemed gratified by their excessive admiration, and gave most gracious smiles, especially when any dish on the table proved a novelty to them. The party did not supply much conversation. Elizabeth was ready to speak whenever there was an opening, but she was seated between Charlotte and Miss De Bourgh

—the former of whom was engaged in listening to Lady Catherine, and the latter said not a word to her all dinner-time. Mrs. Jenkinson was chiefly employed in watching how little Miss De Bourgh ate, pressing her to try some other dish, and fearing she was indisposed. Maria thought speaking out of the question, and the gentlemen did nothing but eat and admire.

When the ladies returned to the drawing-room, there was little to be done but to hear Lady Catherine talk, which she did without any intermission till coffee came in, delivering her opinion on every subject in so decisive a manner as proved that she was not used to have her judgment controverted. She inquired into Charlotte's domestic concerns familiarly and minutely, and gave her a great deal of advice as to the management of them all; told her how everything ought to be regulated in so small a family as hers, and instructed her as to the care of her cows and her poultry. Elizabeth found that nothing was beneath this great lady's attention which could furnish her with an occasion for dictating to others. In the intervals of her discourse with Mrs. Collins she addressed a variety of questions to Maria and Elizabeth, but especially to the latter, of whose connections she knew the least, and who, she observed to Mrs. Collins, was a very genteel, pretty kind of girl. She asked her at different times how many sisters she had, whether they were older or younger than herself, whether any of them were likely to be married, whether they were handsome, where they had been educated, what carriage her father kept, and what had been her mother's maiden name? Elizabeth felt all the impertinence of her questions, but answered them very composedly. Lady Catherine then observed,—

"Your father's estate is entailed on Mr. Collins, I think?—For your sake," turning to Charlotte, "I am glad of it; but otherwise I see no occasion for entailing estates from the female line. It was not thought necessary in Sir Lewis de Bourgh's family.—Do you play and sing, Miss Bennet?"

"A little."

"Oh, then, some time or other we shall be happy to hear you. Our instrument is a capital one, probably superior to—you shall try it some day. Do your sisters play and sing?"

"One of them does."

"Why did not you all learn? You ought all to have learned. The Miss Webbs all play, and their father has not so good an income as yours. Do you draw?"

"No, not at all."

"What, none of you?"

"Not one."

"That is very strange. But I suppose you had no opportunity. Your mother should have taken you to town every spring for the benefit of masters."

"My mother would have had no objection, but my father hates London."

"Has your governess left you?"

"We never had any governess."

"No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! I never heard of such a thing. Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education."

Elizabeth could hardly help smiling, as she assured her that had not been the case.

"Then who taught you? who attended to you? Without a governess, you must have been neglected."

"Compared with some families, I believe we were;

but such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary. Those who chose to be idle certainly might."

"Ay, no doubt, but that is what a governess will prevent; and if I had known your mother, I should have advised her most strenuously to engage one. I always say that nothing is to be done in education without steady and regular instruction, and nobody but a governess can give it. It is wonderful how many families I have been the means of supplying in that way. I am always glad to get a young person well placed out. Four nieces of Mrs. Jenkinson are most delightfully situated through my means; and it was but the other day that I recommended another young person, who was merely accidentally mentioned to me, and the family are quite delighted with her.—Mrs. Collins, did I tell you of Lady Metcalfe's calling yesterday to thank me? She finds Miss Pope a treasure. 'Lady Catherine,' said she, 'you have given me a treasure.'—Are any of your younger sisters out, Miss Bennet?"

"Yes, ma'am, all."

"All! What, all five out at once? Very odd! And you only the second! The younger ones out before the elder are married! Your younger sisters must be very young?"

"Yes; my youngest is not sixteen. Perhaps *she* is full young to be much in company. But really, ma'am, I think it would be very hard upon younger sisters that they should not have their share of society and amusement because the elder may not have the means or the inclination to marry early. The last born has as good a right to the pleasures of youth as the first. And to be kept back on *such* a motive!

I think it would not be very likely to promote sisterly affection or delicacy of mind."

"Upon my word," said her ladyship, "you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person. Pray, what is your age?"

"With three younger sisters grown up," replied Elizabeth, smiling, "your ladyship can hardly expect me to own it."

Lady Catherine seemed quite astonished at not receiving a direct answer; and Elizabeth suspected herself to be the first creature who had ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence.

"You cannot be more than twenty, I am sure; therefore you need not conceal your age."

"I am not one-and-twenty."

When the gentlemen had joined them and tea was over, the card tables were placed. Lady Catherine, Sir William, and Mr. and Mrs. Collins sat down to quadrille; and as Miss De Bourgh chose to play at cassino, the two girls had the honour of assisting Mrs. Jenkinson to make up her party. Their table was superlatively stupid. Scarcely a syllable was uttered that did not relate to the game, except when Mrs. Jenkinson expressed her fears of Miss De Bourgh's being too hot or too cold, or having too much or too little light. A great deal more passed at the other table. Lady Catherine was, generally speaking—stating the mistakes of the three others, or relating some anecdote of herself. Mr. Collins was employed in agreeing to everything her ladyship said, thanking her for every fish he won, and apologising if he thought he won too many. Sir William did not say much. He was storing his memory with anecdotes and noble names.

When Lady Catherine and her daughter had played

as long as they chose, the tables were broken up, the carriage was offered to Mrs. Collins, gratefully accepted, and immediately ordered. The party then gathered round the fire to hear Lady Catherine determine what weather they were to have on the morrow. From these instructions they were summoned by the arrival of the coach ; and with many speeches of thankfulness on Mr. Collins's side, and as many bows on Sir William's, they departed. As soon as they had driven from the door, Elizabeth was called on by her cousin to give her opinion of all that she had seen at Rosings, which, for Charlotte's sake, she made more favourable than it really was. But her commendation, though costing her some trouble, could by no means satisfy Mr. Collins, and he was very soon obliged to take her ladyship's praise into his own hands.

A Duel of Words

[Lady Catherine, furious at the news that her nephew, Mr. Darcy, is in love with Elizabeth Bennet, comes to Longbourn intending to prevent Elizabeth from marrying him.]

One morning, about a week after Bingley's engagement with Jane had been formed, as he and the females of the family were sitting together in the dining-room, their attention was suddenly drawn to the window by the sound of a carriage, and they perceived a chaise and four driving up the lawn. It was too early in the morning for visitors, and besides, the equipage did not answer to that of any of their neighbours. The horses were post ; and neither the carriage, nor the livery of the servant who preceded it, was familiar to them. As it was certain, however, that somebody

was coming, Bingley instantly prevailed on Miss Bennet to avoid the confinement of such an intrusion, and walk away with him into the shrubbery. They both set off, and the conjectures of the remaining three continued, though with little satisfaction, till the door was thrown open, and their visitor entered. It was Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

They were, of course, all intending to be surprised ; but their astonishment was beyond their expectation, and on the part of Mrs. Bennet and Kitty, though she was perfectly unknown to them, even inferior to what Elizabeth felt.

She entered the room with an air more than usually ungracious, made no other reply to Elizabeth's salutation than a slight inclination of the head, and sat down without saying a word. Elizabeth had mentioned her name to her mother on her ladyship's entrance, though no request of introduction had been made.

Mrs. Bennet, all amazement, though flattered by having a guest of such high importance, received her with the utmost politeness. After sitting for a moment in silence, she said, very stiffly, to Elizabeth,—

“ I hope you are well, Miss Bennet. That lady, I suppose, is your mother ? ”

Elizabeth replied very concisely that she was.

“ And *that*, I suppose, is one of your sisters ? ”

“ Yes, madam,” said Mrs. Bennet, delighted to speak to a Lady Catherine. “ She is my youngest girl but one. My youngest of all is lately married, and my eldest is somewhere about the ground, walking with a young man, who, I believe, will soon become a part of the family.”

“ You have a very small park here,” returned Lady Catherine, after a short silence.

“ It is nothing in comparison of Rosings, my lady, I daresay ; but I assure you it is much larger than Sir William Lucas’s.”

“ This must be a most inconvenient sitting-room for the evening in summer : the windows are full west.”

Mrs. Bennet assured her that they never sat there after dinner ; and then added,—

“ May I take the liberty of asking your ladyship whether you left Mr. and Mrs. Collins well ? ”

“ Yes, very well. I saw them the night before last.”

Elizabeth now expected that she would produce a letter for her from Charlotte, as it seemed the only probable motive for her calling. But no letter appeared, and she was completely puzzled.

Mrs. Bennet, with great civility, begged her ladyship to take some refreshment ; but Lady Catherine very resolutely, and not very politely, declined eating anything, and then, rising up, said to Elizabeth,—

“ Miss Bennet, there seemed to be a prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of your lawn. I should be glad to take a turn in it, if you will favour me with your company.”

“ Go, my dear,” cried her mother, “ and show her ladyship about the different walks. I think she will be pleased with the hermitage.”

Elizabeth obeyed, and running into her own room for her parasol, attended her noble guest downstairs. As they passed through the hall, Lady Catherine opened the doors into the dining-parlour and drawing-room, and pronouncing them, after a short survey, to be decent-looking rooms, walked on.

Her carriage remained at the door, and Elizabeth saw that her waiting-woman was in it. They proceeded in silence along the gravel walk that led to the

copse : Elizabeth was determined to make no effort for conversation with a woman who was now more than usually insolent and disagreeable.

"How could I ever think her like her nephew?" said she, as she looked in her face.

As soon as they entered the copse, Lady Catherine began in the following manner :—

"You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason of my journey hither. Your own heart, your own conscience, must tell you why I come."

Elizabeth looked with unaffected astonishment.

"Indeed, you are mistaken, madam : I have not been at all able to account for the honour of seeing you here."

"Miss Bennet," replied her ladyship, in an angry tone, "you ought to know that I am not to be trifled with. But however insincere *you* may choose to be, you shall not find *me* so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that *you*, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I *know* it must be a scandalous falsehood, though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you."

"If you believed it impossible to be true," said Elizabeth, colouring with astonishment and disdain, "I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What could your ladyship propose by it?"

"At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted."

"Your coming to Longbourn to see me and my family," said Elizabeth coolly, "will be rather a confirmation of it—if, indeed, such a report is in existence."

"If! Do you then pretend to be ignorant of it? Has it not been industriously circulated by yourselves? Do you not know that such a report is spread abroad?"

"I never heard that it was."

"And can you likewise declare that there is no *foundation* for it?"

"I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions which *I* shall not choose to answer."

"This is not to be borne. Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?"

"Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible."

"It ought to be so; it must be so while he retains the use of his reason. But *your* arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in."

"If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it."

"Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns."

"But you are not entitled to know *mine*; nor will such behaviour as this ever induce me to be explicit."

"Let me be rightly understood. This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place—no, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to *my* daughter. Now, what have you to say?"

“ Only this—that if he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me.”

Lady Catherine hesitated for a moment, and then replied,—

“ The engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy they have been intended for each other. It was the favourite wish of *his* mother as well as of hers. While in their cradles we planned the union ; and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished, in their marriage, to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family ! Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends—to his tacit engagement with Miss De Bourgh ? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy ? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin ? ”

“ Yes ; and I had heard it before. But what is that to me ? If there is no other objection to my marrying your nephew, I shall certainly not be kept from it by knowing that his mother and aunt wish him to marry Miss De Bourgh. You both did as much as you could in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is he not to make another choice ? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him ? ”

“ Because honour, decorum, prudence, nay interest, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest ; for do not expect to be noticed by his family or friends if you wilfully act against the inclinations of all. You will be censured, slighted, and despised by every one connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace ; your name will never even be mentioned by any of us.”

"These are heavy misfortunes," replied Elizabeth. "But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to repine."

"Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you! Is this your gratitude for my attentions to you last spring? Is nothing due to me on that score? Let us sit down. You are to understand, Miss Bennet, that I came here with the determined resolution of carrying my purpose; nor will I be dissuaded from it. I have not been used to submit to any person's whims. I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment."

"*That* will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on *me*."

"I will not be interrupted! Hear me in silence. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. They are descended, on the maternal side, from the same noble line; and, on the father's, from respectable, honourable, and ancient, though untitled, families. Their fortune on both sides is splendid. They are destined for each other by the voice of every member of their respective houses; and what is to divide them?—the upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections, or fortune! Is this to be endured? But it must not, shall not be! If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up."

"In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman, I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal."

"True. You *are* a gentleman's daughter. But

what was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition."

"Whatever my connections may be," said Elizabeth "if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to *you*."

"Tell me, once for all, are you engaged to him?"

Though Elizabeth would not, for the mere purpose of obliging Lady Catherine, have answered this question, she could not but say, after a moment's deliberation,—

"I am not."

Lady Catherine seemed pleased.

"And will you promise me never to enter into such an engagement?"

"I will make no promise of the kind."

"Miss Bennet, I am shocked and astonished. I expected to find a more reasonable young woman. But do not deceive yourself into a belief that I will ever recede. I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require."

"And I certainly *never* shall give it. I am not to be intimidated into anything so wholly unreasonable. Your ladyship wants Mr. Darcy to marry your daughter; but would my giving you the wished-for promise make *their* marriage at all more probable? Supposing him to be attached to me, would *my* refusing to accept his hand make him wish to bestow it on his cousin? Allow me to say, Lady Catherine, that the arguments with which you have supported this extraordinary application have been as frivolous as the application was ill-judged. You have widely mistaken my character if you think I can be worked on by such persuasions as these. How far your nephew might approve of your interference in *his*

affairs I cannot tell, but you have certainly no right to concern yourself in mine. I must beg, therefore, to be importuned no further on the subject."

"Not so hasty, if you please. I have by no means done. To all the objections I have already urged I have still another to add. I am no stranger to the particulars of your youngest sister's infamous elopement. I know it all—that the young man's marrying her was a patched-up business, at the expense of your father and uncle. And is *such* a girl to be my nephew's sister? Is *her* husband, who is the son of his late father's steward, to be his brother? Heaven and earth! of what are you thinking? Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?"

"You can *now* have nothing further to say," she resentfully answered. "You have insulted me in every possible method. I must beg to return to the house."

And she rose as she spoke. Lady Catherine rose also, and they turned back. Her ladyship was highly incensed.

"You have no regard, then, for the honour and credit of my nephew! Unfeeling, selfish girl! Do you not consider that a connection with you must disgrace him in the eyes of everybody?"

"Lady Catherine, I have nothing further to say. You know my sentiments."

"You are then resolved to have him?"

"I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to *you*, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me."

"It is well. You refuse, then, to oblige me. You refuse to obey the claims of duty, honour, and gratitude. You are determined to ruin him in the opinion

of all his friends, and make him the contempt of the world."

"Neither duty, nor honour, nor gratitude," replied Elizabeth, "has any possible claim on me, in the present instance. No principle of either would be violated by my marriage with Mr. Darcy. And with regard to the resentment of his family or the indignation of the world, if the former *were* excited by his marrying me, it would not give me one moment's concern; and the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn."

"And this is your real opinion—this is your final resolve! Very well. I shall know now how to act. Do not imagine, Miss Bennet, that your ambition will ever be gratified. I came to try you. I hoped to find you reasonable; but depend upon it I will carry my point."

In this manner Lady Catherine talked on till they were at the door of the carriage, when, turning hastily round, she added,—

"I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments to your mother. You deserve no such attention. I am most seriously displeased."

Elizabeth made no answer; and without attempting to persuade her ladyship to return into the house, walked quietly into it herself. She heard the carriage drive away as she proceeded upstairs. Her mother impatiently met her at the door of her dressing-room, to ask why Lady Catherine would not come in again and rest herself.

"She did not choose it," said her daughter; "she would go."

"She is a very fine-looking woman. And her calling here was prodigiously civil! for she only came, I suppose, to tell us the Collinses were well. She is

on her road somewhere, I daresay, and so, passing through Meryton, thought she might as well call on you. I suppose she had nothing particular to say to you, Lizzy ? ”

Elizabeth was forced to give in to a little falsehood here ; for to acknowledge the substance of their conversation was impossible.

Appreciations

GOLDWIN SMITH.

JANE AUSTEN'S view of the world is genial, kindly, and, we repeat, free from anything like cynicism. It is that of a clear-sighted, and somewhat satirical onlooker, loving what deserves love, and amusing herself with the foibles, the self-deceptions, the affectations of humanity. Refined almost to fastidiousness, she is hard upon vulgarity; not, however, on good-natured vulgarity, such as that of Mrs. Jennings in *Sense and Sensibility*, but on vulgarity like that of Miss Steele, in the same novel, combined at once with effrontery and with meanness of soul.

Jane Austen held the mirror up to her time, or at least to a certain class of people of her time; and her time was two generations and more before ours. We are reminded of this as we read her works by a number of little touches of manners and customs belonging to the early part of the century, and anterior to the rush of discovery and development which the century has brought with it. There are no railroads, and no lucifer matches. It takes you two days and a half, even when you are flying on the wings of love or remorse, to get from Somersetshire to London. A young lady who has snuffed her candle out has to go to bed in the dark. The watchman calls the hours of the night. Magnates go about in chariots and four with outriders, their coachmen wearing wigs. People dine at five, and instead of spending the evening in

brilliant conversation as we do, they spend it in an unintellectual rubber of whist, or a round game. Life is unelectric, untelegraphic ; it is spent more quietly and it is spent at home. If you are capable of enjoying tranquillity, at least by way of occasional contrast to the stir and stress of the present age, you will find in these tales the tranquillity of a rural neighbourhood and a little country town in England a century ago.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THAT young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going ; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early !

MACAULAY.

I HAVE now read once again all Miss Austen's novels ; charming they are. There are in the world no compositions which approach nearer to perfection.

W. H. HELM.

HER name may never be among those that are painted round the reading-rooms of National Libraries, nor included by many school-children in examination lists of eminent authors. Hers is too delicate a product to attract the man or woman " in the street,"

There is a bouquet about it that is lost on the palate which enjoys the "strong" fiction of the material phase through which humanity is now passing—passing perhaps more briefly than most of us imagine.

May we not compare the work of Jane Austen with a group of apple-trees in a sunny corner of some vast orchard? There are eight Austen trees in the literary orchard. Two of them are stunted and bear a poor crop of a sort little better than crab-apples. The other six are of several kinds, but all of fine quality and producing delicious fruit of varying sweetness. Countless thousands of novels have been published since Jane Austen's were given to the world, and many of them have been unseemly, and of evil influence. But the taste of countless writers and readers has been sweetened by the fruit of her delightful mind, of the passing of whose fragrant harvest through English literature it is not too much to say, as Jane herself said of Anne Elliot's walk through Bath: "It was almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way."

(From Jane Austen and her Country House Comedy).

THOMAS SECCOMBE.

HER field of observation was small, a network of a few parishes, eight or nine family circles perhaps, all told, a range only temporarily enlarged before 1801 by an occasional visit to Bath. But within that narrow circle how marvellously competent she is! Of her impeccability as an observer we can get some idea from her face—extremely kind and intelligent, yes, but just a little feline, with decidedly dancing and mischievous, if not positively saucy

eyes. She certainly did not travel very far, for the types of her first three novels, in two of which (*Northanger Abbey* and *Pride and Prejudice*) it is probable that the heroine is a more or less idealised Jane. Her lady friends were mercifully unsuspicious of the fact that she was taking them in with those naughty eyes of hers ; but her talents were never recognised locally at all—she was “ the lively Miss Jane, from the Rectory, you know,” to all her acquaintance . . . Moreover, she carefully mixed the colours on her palette. That she used a very fine brush is obvious, but of her studio secrets we know practically nothing. We can imagine her, however, writing with Cowper, “ To touch and retouch is the secret of almost all good writing.” As with little poetry, so with little prose : it should be, like little men, nervous, masculine, and compact.

The greatness of Jane Austen consists in the nice precision with which she adjusts a magnifying glass to five or six well-to-do families in two or three small villages of a southern English county ; and the sort of accidents and emotions she deals with are a bad cold, a broken collar-bone, a new arrival at a country house, the departure of a militia regiment, a visit to Bath, the backwardness of a gentleman at a county ball. One writer carves profiles on a cherry-stone, the other rough hews a Colossus upon the eternal rock. The region of Jane Austen is that of a cultivated valley enclosed with hedge-rows and bounded by a park wall. Shakespeare’s is a mountainous country, of sounding waters and mighty precipices. In order to get an idea of Jane Austen’s outstanding excellence, we must compare her not with the giants of literature ; we must not measure her satire with that of Swift or Fielding or Thackeray ;

to compare her with George Eliot is as absurd as to compare Cowper with Wordsworth. We must endeavour to apprise her vivacity and her exquisite literary malice by comparing her work with that of the writers to whom her line of relationship is clear: Richardson, Burney, Edgeworth, Mitford, the Trollopes, and the Oliphants and their successors.

(From the Bookman Illustrated History of English Literature).

A Selection from **Herbert & Daniel's List**

Second Edition] THE IDEAL BIRTHDAY PRESENT [*Fifth Thousand*

For Her Namesake. An Anthology of Poetical Addresses by Devout Lovers to Gentle Maidens. Edited by STEPHEN LANGTON.

‘The most fastidious of lovers will find something to please him in this industrious collection of passages of verse—a maiden of a different name being the chosen subject of each of them.’—*Times*.

‘Made with excellent taste and most attractively produced.’—*The Lady*.

UNIFORM WITH ABOVE

A Series of Dainty Anthologies

Each with Decorated End Papers and Cover Designs

Fcap 8vo. 3s. 6d. net; leather 5s. net.

The Book of the Seven Ages.
Edited by HENRY W. CLARKE.

An Artist's Day-Book. Edited by THOMAS BURKE.

The Charm of India. Edited by CLAUD FIELD.

An Anthology of Poetic Prose. By PROFESSOR COWL, of Bristol University.

Music in Poetry and Prose. Edited by ADA INGPEN.

21 MADDUX STREET, LONDON, W.

POETRY

A Book of Verse by Living Women.

With an Introduction by
LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE.

List of Authors—Anonymous, Jane Barlow, Anna Bunston, Frances Cornford, Olive Custance (Lady Alfred Douglas), Michael Field, Mrs Hamilton-King, Emily Hickey, Winifred Lucas (Mrs Le Bailly), Eva M. Martin, Annie Matheson, Alice Meynell, Rosa Mulholland, Dolly Radford, Mary Robinson, Lady Margaret Sackville, Dora Sigerson Shorter, Cicely Fox Smith, Elinor Sweetman, Laurence Alma Tadema, Rachel Annand Taylor, Hon. Grace Tollemache, Rosalind Travers, Katharine Tynan, Rosamund Marriott Watson, Margaret L. Woods—Bibliography. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 3s. 6d. net; leather, 5s. net.

‘This dainty volume is full of good things. The selection is one of the best I have ever seen.’
—C. K. S. in the *Sphere*.

‘The volume is proof indisputable of a widespread intellectual and poetic vitality amongst our contemporaries of the sweeter sex.’—*Yorkshire Observer*.

HERBERT & DANIEL

Eyes of Youth A Book of Verse

By PADRAIC COLUM, HON. MRS LYTTON, SHANE LESLIE, VIOLA AND OLIVIA MEYNELL, HON. MRS LINDSAY, HUGH AUSTIN, MONICA SALEEBY, MAURICE HEALY AND FRANCIS MEYNELL. With four Early Poems by FRANCIS THOMPSON, now first published in book form. The Foreword by G. K. CHESTERTON. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

‘Most of the contents show a pure and modest poetic purpose ; and the whole helps one to realise that much good verse is being written in quietness by people who write it for its own sake.’—*Times*.

‘It is not possible to cite all the “variety verging on quaintness” represented in this interesting little book, which may be commended to the notice of all interested in poetry.’—*Daily Telegraph*.

The Porch of Paradise. An Allegorical Poem. By ANNABUNSTON, Author of *Mingled Wine*. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

‘A poem of high endeavour and sustained accomplishment.’—*T. P.’s Weekly*.

21 MADDOX STREET, LONDON, W.

ESSAYS

Adventures in Prose. A Book of Essays. By HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

CONTENTS

I.—ON CATS

A Policy towards Cats—The State and the Cat—On the Purring of Cats—The Black Cat and Christopher Wren.

II.—ON BOOKS

On a Great Novel—On Burns and Bacchanalian Verse—The Country House—The Truth of Midnight.

III.—ON MUSIC

'Chopin Villa'—The Spell of Old Music—On Handel's Largo—The Sea in Music—Of Fauns and Oboes.

IV.—ON VARIOUS THEMES

The Decay of Melodrama—Micromania—Little Jim—The Okapi and the Financier—Inspiration of Grandfathers—The Goatherds—The Sport of War—An Indian Saint—On Waterproof Skins—Confessions of a Juror—On Faddists—On Great Families—A Remonstrance with Moralists—On Cycling in London—The Modern Peep-show.

V.—EASTERN SKETCHES

Osman Digna—Doolie's Traitor—The Sultan's Birthday—A Book of Martyrs—The Lady of the Bridge—A Levantine Messiah.

HERBERT & DANIEL

ESSAYS

Studies in Arcady. And other Essays from a Country Parsonage.

By R. L. GALES. Crown 8vo.
5s. net.

CONTENTS

I.—STUDIES IN ARCADY

The Literature of the People—Dicta of the Poor—More Dicta of the Poor—Village Theology—The Labourer's Listlessness—The Humours of Parish Visiting—Thrift on Fifteen Shillings a Week—A Goodly Heritage—Professor Jack's 'Mad Shepherd's'—A Sunday Dinner Table.

II.—FOLK-LORE AND TRADITION

The Christian Lore of Angels—The Devil in Christian Legend and Tradition—Judas in Legend and Folk-lore—Spiders in Legend and Folk-lore—Birds in Christian Legend and Symbol—The Christian Tradition in Shakespeare—Christian Dogma and Folk-lore—Christian Popular Poetry—Easter Traditions—On the Ox and the Ass of the Nativity—A Green Heaven—On Nursery Rhymes.

III.—SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Some Old-fashioned Phrases—On Victorian English—The Destruction of Dialect—On Proverbs—The Names of the Days of the Week—On the Names of Flowers—Beautiful Words.

IV.—DISCUSSIONS AND DIGRESSIONS

Catholicism and Happiness—Life Living Creatures—Christian and Romantic—On Pan-cakes and Pan-pipes—Christmas Beer in Workhouses—Arts and Mysteries.

'Whether he gossips of beautiful words, or the names of flowers, or old-fashioned phrases, or Catholicism and happiness, or the ox and the ass of the Nativity, or birds in Christian legend and symbol, or thrift on 15s. per week, he gives one the impression of a real good sort; a parson who is also a scholar. Men are scarce; and so are good books. Here is a good book by a man.'—*Sunday Chronicle*.

21 MADDOX STREET, LONDON, W.

ESSAYS

A Modern Outlook. Studies of English and American Tendencies. By J. A. HOBSON. Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

CONTENTS

LIFE AND LETTERS

The Lost Art of Conversation—Co-Partnership in Nature—The Population Question among Books—The Compensations of Stupidity—A Go as-you-please Philosophy—A Plea for Controversy—A Puritan Document—The Grip of the Specialist—The Confession of Mr Wells—To the Memory of Thomas Paine—The Case of Samuel Butler.

THE WOMAN OF THE FUTURE

The Woman of the Future—The Sex War—The Alarm of Motherhood—The Business of Marriage.

AMERICAN TRAITS

The Genius of Lincoln—The Autocrat—A Critic of America—The American Woman—The Spirit of American Humour—Is America Heading for Aristocracy?—The Romance of America—The Boom-Child.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

The Church for the People—An Anglican Bishop—The Faith of Free Thought—The Churches and the Social Soul.

OF POLITICS

The Sovereignty of Society—The Wild Man—Agitation—The Game of Efficiency—The Politician's Soul—Our Lost Romance—The Two Englands—The Sacred Rage of the People.

‘On politics in general Mr Hobson says many acute and true things.’—*Spectator*.

‘Mr J. A. Hobson is one of those fortunate men whose names at once suggest a quality.’—*The Bookman*.

‘A volume full of keen perception and ripe thought.’—*Inquirer*.

HERBERT & DANIEL

FICTION

Oliver's Kind Women. *By*
PHILIP GIBBS, Author of *The*
Street of Adventure. Crown 8vo. 6s.

'Virginia Garland was a woman of indomitable spirit and fine sensibility, one of the best realised and the best worth realising characters in modern fiction—a sensitive spring of finely polished steel might describe her roughly—but she cannot be fully known save in Mr Gibbs' full-length portrait of her. . . .'*—Morning Post.*

Martha Vine. A Love Story of Simple Life. *By* VIOLA MEYNELL
Crown 8vo. 6s.

'It is a very unusual pleasure to take up an anonymous novel and to find in it interest beyond the common, and a skill in psychological analysis approaching genius.'*—Observer.*

Zoe. A Portrait. *By* W. F. CASEY.
Crown 8vo. 6s.

'It is a capital canvas—a very Sargent—of one of those doubtful women moving in society.'*—Manchester Guardian.*

'It is quite excellent. Zoe is wonderfully pretty and attractive; she is also selfish, sensuous, and designing—just the sort of spider that plays havoc with the heart of the poor male butterfly.'*—Sheffield Daily Telegraph.*

The Forward in Love. An Improbable Comedy. *By* RICHARD BIRD. 6s.

21 MADDUX STREET, LONDON, W.

SHORT STORIES

The Hermit of Dreams. By THE HON. MRS LINDSAY. With Three Drawings by CLAUDE SHEPPERSON. Beth, Incense and Myrrh, The Trembling of the Scales, The Story of Innocent Heart, Mary Had a Little Lamb. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

‘A book of a absorbing interest. At the first assault she has carried the difficult citadel of literary achievement and has planted thereon her distinctive flag.’—*Ta’let*.

‘Five stories instinct with mystic charm, with grace, beauty and reverence. They are told by the tall, emaciated, suffering Hermit, and they seem to bring the three worlds—the Past, the Present, and the Future—very simply, clearly, naturally and beautifully close to one another and to us. It is a little book to stir thought, to give comfort and to win affection.’—*The Bookman*.

The Land of the Yellow Spring and other Japanese Stories. By F. HADLAND DAVIS. 5s. net.

‘Stories which are all poems in prose, beautifully conceived and carefully executed. Lafcadio Hearn would have welcomed these ardent studies of exotic romance.’—*Morning Post*.

In the Fighting Days at Sea. A Book for Boys. By EDWARD FRASER. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6s.

The Story of Pierrot. By S. R. LITTLEWOOD. With Black and White Illustrations by SIDNEY FILMORE.

HERBERT & DANIEL

General Booth and the Salvation Army. By A. M. NICOL. Crown 8vo, 6s. net.

‘If the book is taken calmly and deliberately as a whole, all the confidences, flattering and unflattering, estimated in due proportion, it will prove of exceptional value and interest. No such collection of human documents and data about the Salvation Army has ever before been presented to the friendly and unfriendly public.’—*Daily Chronicle*.

The Life of Cardinal Vaughan. By J. G. SNEAD-COX. With Seven Photogravure Portraits. 2 Vols. Demy 8vo. 21s. net. **Fourth Thousand**

‘Almost an autobiography. Done with discretion, although the candours of the narrative are not the least of its conspicuous merits.’—*Athenæum*.

‘A piece of genuine and permanent literature, warm-hearted and communicative.’—*Daily Telegraph*.

‘From a literary point of view, the best biography we have read for years.’—*British Weekly*.

Life and Letters of John Lingard, D.D. By MARTIN HAILE AND EDWIN BONNEY. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.

The Romance of Modern Surgery. A Tribute to Listerism. By C. W. SALEEBY, M.D. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.

21 MADDUX STREET, LONDON, W.

BIOGRAPHY

Talleyrand the Man. Translated from the French of Bernard de Lacombe. With Two Portraits in Collotype. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.

‘There is something enigmatic in the extraordinary personality, which is newly and effectively studied in this volume, a volume which few people will read without having their mental portrait of Talleyrand softened and humanised.’—*Daily Telegraph*.

Benedictine Pioneers in Australia. By DOM NORBERT BIRT, O.S.B. 2 vols. demy 8vo. 25s. net.

The practically unknown story of the Benedictine Pioneers in Australia forms an important chapter in Colonial history. Dom Norbert Birt has spent several years in the study of the documents bearing on the subject, and his work is both a valuable piece of research and a vivid description of the romantic adventures of the first missionaries in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Life of St Teresa. Adapted from the French by ALICE LADY LOVAT, with a Preface by Mgr. ROBERT HUGH BENSON. Demy 8vo. 10s 6d. net.

HERBERT & DANIEL

An Artist in Corfu. By SOPHIE ATKINSON. With Fourteen Coloured Illustrations and Cover Design and End-Papers by the Author. 18s. net.

On ancient and modern authority the author claims that the little-known island is one of the loveliest spots of Greece, and supports her claim with enthusiastic pen and a choice of dainty water-colours.

‘The water-colour drawings are highly accomplished, full of light and colour, and so indeed is her text.’—*The Times*

‘A very attractively got-up work.’—*Westminster Gazette*

Perrault’s Fairy Tales: Newly translated by S. R. LITTLEWOOD. With Twelve Coloured Illustrations by HONOR C. APPLETON. 5s. net.

Songs of Innocence. By WILLIAM BLAKE. With a Preface by THOMAS SECCOMBE, and Twelve Coloured Illustrations by HONOR C. APPLETON. Small Quarto. 5s. net.

‘It is a joy to handle this truly lovely volume, which all lovers of childhood should possess.’—*The Child*.

The Baby of the Future. By H. D. TRAILL. Reprinted by kind permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*, and Illustrated in Colour by HONOR C. APPLETON. 1s. net.

The Regent Library

Small crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net each vol.

The general reader and the busy man who can spare but little time to devote to books will find in these carefully chosen volumes of extracts useful Introductions to Authors of perennial interest. Both the selections and the Introduction have been entrusted to writers who can speak with the authority of full knowledge on their subjects.

JOHNSON

By ALICE MEYNELL. With Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON

LEIGH HUNT

By EDWARD STORER

RICHARDSON

By SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

WORDSWORTH

By E. HALLAM MOORHOUSE

BLAISE DE MONLUC

By A. W. EVANS

FANNY BURNEY

By THOMAS SECCOMBE

MRS GASKELL

By C. A. CHADWICK

SHELLEY

By ROGER INGPEN

COWPER

By EDWARD STORER

NEWMAN

By DANIEL O'CONNOR

[In preparation]

DISRAELI

By WILFRID MEYNELL

[In preparation]

Other vols. in preparation

HERBERT & DANIEL

DATE DUE

DEC 29 1998

JUN 12 2006

JUN 10 2002

JUL 13 2002

AUG 28 2002

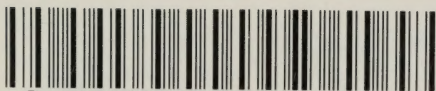
FEB 25 2010

MAR 31 2010

APR 26 2010

APR 09 2010

Brigham Young University



3 1197 00066 9082

DAMAGE

W

FEB 03 1996

